

English Language Teaching

VOLUME XIV · NUMBER 1

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Graded and Restricted Vocabularies and their Use in the Oral Teaching of English as a Second Language—I

BERNARD LOTT

This article has a double purpose: first, it attempts to reconsider, in the light of the latest research, the value of some graded and restricted vocabularies of English words, and of the principles upon which they are compiled; second, it suggests some ways in which these vocabularies may be of practical use to the teacher in normal classroom practice.

Restricted, minimal or so-called 'island' vocabularies, i.e. those which contain sufficient words for adequate expression at a certain level of achievement, have so far been used almost entirely in preparing simple reading material for students at various stages in their learning of the language, and in rewriting established literary classics in simplified form; the help they may afford in the major task of learning and exercising vocabulary has been almost everywhere totally neglected. It is true that at the lower levels simplified material for reading practice is a recognized supplement to the main course, and a worth-while course-book will naturally exercise a vocabulary control of its own, but (as will be shown) the value of this material for teaching purposes seems to be at its greatest when the vocabulary is most restricted.

However, the branch of the teacher's class work in which the grading of vocabularies is most valuable may be neither of these, but the oral explanation, when the need arises, of a 'normal' text, with each problem treated on the spot as it occurs. Despite at least one published assertion to the contrary, true simplification of material for study must by definition lead to readier understanding. The results of an experiment reported in 1937 are summarized as follows:

keeping other elements constant, the simplification of vocabulary does not materially facilitate pupils' understanding of material read. Only in a limited number of instances did the substitution of known words for unknown words aid pupils' comprehension. On the other hand, there were times when other structural elements were made more difficult.¹

¹*Elementary English Review*, XIV, April, 1937, p. 146.

The final sentence of this summary report suggests that vocabulary simplification was sometimes exercised at the expense of structural directness (as can easily happen with, for example, Basic English), and on these grounds the whole experiment is suspect. Vocabulary restriction is in fact usually found to be linked with simplification of structures, though, for particular reasons which are discussed later, the so-called 'phrasal' verbs do not always conform with this tendency. It is probably true to say that if the structures become more complicated when the vocabulary of an extract is simplified, then the language of the extract will invariably appear artificial.

What are the qualities which a teacher should look for in vocabularies of this sort? How can they form a basis for oral teaching? In what ways can they best be brought to serve that imparting of skill in the use of a complete and actual linguistic pattern which is the aim of all language teachers? These are some of the questions to be discussed in what follows.

The grading and selecting of vocabulary are tasks which have been approached from two directions (the first subdivided according to the treatment of the source material):

1. (a) by considering word frequency, without regard to the distribution of items in different types of source material; it was generally believed by workers in this field that, provided enough words were counted, some sort of constant would emerge. This belief has not been substantiated, but that does not detract from the value of the pioneer work of Horn¹, who began with two lists of words used respectively in bankers' correspondence and in 'highly personal letters'², and ended with a compilation of the 10,000 words which he found most commonly used in somewhat more than 5 million running words of written English. As Horn's main aim was to help in the teaching of spelling, words of less than four letters and some very common words are not included;

(b) by taking into account distribution according to the *character* of the source material (this has been termed 'range') as well as frequency of occurrence. The composite Faucett-Maki list³ is of this type, in that it gives not only

¹Ernest Horn: *A Basic Writing Vocabulary*, Iowa University Monograph in Education, First Series, No. 4, April, 1926.

²The first of these is given in *English Journal*, XII, June, 1923, pp. 282-297. The second list remains unpublished, but is cited in *A Basic Writing Vocabulary*, p. 16.

³L. Faucett and I. Maki: *A Study of English Word-Values Statistically Determined from the latest Extensive Word-Counts*, Tokyo, 1932.

the frequencies of words but also the types of material in which they were found.

2. by choosing words covering the widest possible area of meaning in an attempt to compile a definition or 'island' vocabulary, one, that is, which will be found adequate for the expression of normal responses and for the imparting of everyday information. Of these, Basic English¹ is the most famous, but by no means the earliest; Timothe Bright,² for instance, produced a minimal list of 559 words as long ago as 1588.

These three approaches to the problem of grading and restricting vocabulary can be, and have been, combined; the *General Service List*³ represented a great advance on anything that had gone before, since in fixing the number of head-words more or less arbitrarily at 2,000, criteria not only of frequency and range but also of maximum utility were taken into consideration.

An item of relatively low frequency [is] selected because it alone covers a certain range of necessary ideas. Thus *Preserve* (food), 7 per cent of 350 [occurrences in 5 million running words], is the only satisfactory cover for canning, bottling, salting, freezing, jam making: the rest of the word is merely a literary synonym of *Keep safe*, and is of doubtful value⁴.

As material for the teaching of English as a second language, the available word-lists vary considerably in value, and it should be remembered that many of them were compiled with other kinds of teaching in view. Thorndike's Word Books⁵, for example, were prepared to help American teachers in the grading of reading material for students of school age whose *mother tongue* was English. Nevertheless, the brief critical estimates which follow can be fairly applied to the lists under review whatever their specific purpose or purposes may have been, and will not be unreasonably biased towards a particular usage. And since later lists are for the most part derived from those discussed here, they will often be found to share both the virtues and the faults indicated.

Items at the highest level of both objective (frequency and range) grading and of subjective ('necessity') grading present no further

¹C. K. Ogden: *Basic English*, London, 1930.

²Timothe Bright: *Characterie: An Arte of shorte, swifte and secrete writing by character*, London, 1588.

³Michael West: *A General Service List of English Words*, London, revised edition, 1953.

⁴West, p. ix.

⁵Culminating in E. L. Thorndike and I. Lorge: *The Teachers' Word Book of 30,000 Words*, New York (Columbia), 1944.

problems, and cover the most substantial field of agreement among compilers of vocabularies: nine or ten words (the list is usually *I, the, and, to, a, of, be, in, we, have*) constitute about 25 per cent of all words used in written English; about 50 words constitute 50 per cent. Because such agreement is arrived at by assessment in a number of different ways and from a wide variety of source material, the discovery is of the utmost value and practical importance to the teacher, and leaves no doubt as to the words upon which a course in English should at the outset be based. But the longer the list, the lower will be the average frequency-range/necessity rating of its items, and to discover when control ceases to be of much significance it is necessary to observe some lists in action.

In lists arranged in order of frequency and range, such as the Institute for Research in English Teaching *First 500 English Words*¹ or the Lorge *Semantic Count*², no noun occurs before about the 75th position; the first is *man*. All the words which precede this in the lists may be broadly termed 'operators'. But as soon as nouns begin to appear in any quantity, the numbering takes on a look of arbitrariness, since, despite the regard paid to considerations of range, the character of the source material quickly comes to be reflected. This is shown very clearly in the widely-used *Century Senior Dictionary*³; this dictionary prints figures which, it is claimed, indicate in what thousand, if any, among the twenty thousand most used words of the language the items occur. It shows, for instance, that in the examined material the word *anther* falls among the 8th thousand most-used words, yet *optimist* occurs only in the 18th thousand; i.e. *optimist* is used considerably less than half as frequently as *anther*. And to prove that this is not just a chance curiosity, the following words may be quoted as surprisingly high in frequency assessment: *Aeneas* (11) (i.e. it falls in the 11th thousand), *marge* (13), *saber/sabre* (10). These and similar misjudgements have certainly come about because the source material was not fully representative of Modern English, and the question how to make it so remains unanswered. Again, the fact that considerations of meaning were ignored when the word-counts were incorporated in the dictionary makes its testimony doubtful; a word is assessed according to its frequency as a word (i.e. a row of letters between spaces in print), not as (in a general sense) a unit of meaning. Hence, for example, *crow* (verb) is placed in the

¹Institute for Research in English Teaching: *The First 500 English Words of Most Frequent Occurrence* (leaflet), Tokyo, no date.

²I. Lorge: *The Semantic Count of the 570 Commonest Words*, New York, 1938.

³E. L. Thorndike: *Thorndike Century Senior Dictionary*, Chicago, &c., 1941.

second thousand, but *crow* (noun) is not assessed, and is therefore to be taken as outside the 20,000 most used words in English; this compared oddly with, say, *rook* (noun), which falls in the 7th thousand. Defects similar to these detract from the value of the *Word Books* by E. L. Thorndike. The source material set out in detail in the *Book of Twenty Thousand Words*¹ is mostly old-fashioned and literary in flavour, and so too is a good deal of that used for the 'juvenile count'². Old-fashioned and literary sources would probably not have been used so extensively if Thorndike could have foreseen what part his word-books were destined to play in the preparation of reading material for students whose mother tongue was not English, but the objections are valid even in the classroom where English is the first language, since the lists seem not to have been compiled especially for the teaching of English literature but for general statements of word usage. Dewey had this to say of them:

The heterogeneous selection of material is by no means representativ [sic] of anything in particular, such as the words most used by school children or by adults, in reading or in writing; and as representativ of everything in general is scarcely more defensible. . . . Furthermore . . . beyond the 500 or at most the 1,000 commonest words, no statement of the inherently commonest words of English, independent of the particular material analized, is possible . . . in other important particulars, including an express or implied confidence in the results not warranted by the basic conditions, this latest and most extended word count is open to serious criticism.³

Dewey has himself given frequency counts of a little over a thousand root words and citations, based upon a much more critical sampling of source material, which are claimed to be representative of modern usage, written, spoken and printed.⁴ In the face of these objections it is difficult to see how, *judged by the criterion of relative usefulness alone*, the grading of vocabulary on word-counts as practised by Thorndike and his collaborators can have any practical significance after at most the first thousand words.

The type of list drawn up on considerations of maximal usefulness will be exemplified by its most influential and far-reaching example,

¹Thorndike: *Teachers' Word Book of Twenty Thousand Words*, New York, 1931, pp. 165-176.

²Thorndike: *Teachers' Book of 30,000 Words*, New York, 1944, pp. 253-5.

³G. Dewey: *The Relativ [sic] Frequency of English Speech Sounds*, Harvard Studies in Education, Vol. IV, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1923; new ed. 1950, p. 5.

⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 8.

Basic English,¹ though Janet Aiken's *Little English*,² had it been completed with notes on meanings and on permitted phrases and compounds, might have formed further interesting testimony. Ogden's *Basic English* has its origin in a linguistic philosophy suggested by Jeremy Bentham's 'theory of fictions':

Some words point at things, as the hands of a clock point at the hours. Others, such as *right*, or *motion*, or *of*, or *liberty*, [i.e. 'fictions'] are like single parts of a particular clock . . . in its place the part helps to perform some operation, and you can see what sort of a job it does. . . . In language, some words are not even parts. . . . They are accelerators and lubricants.³

Ogden's own refinements on these hints appear, with much else, in his book *The Meaning of Meaning* (London, 1923, revised edition 1927), and the philosophical principles of *Basic* which spring from this work may be thus summarized: the purposes of *Basic* are to provide, first, an international auxiliary language, and second a rational introduction to normal English, both as a first step, complete in itself, for those whose mother tongue is not English and also as a grammatical introduction, encouraging clarity of thought and expression, for English-speaking peoples at any stage of language proficiency. It is, of course, the second of these aims which is relevant here, but it would be wrong to particularize without first paying tribute in general to the energy and skill with which Ogden and his collaborators worked out their assumptions, and to the subtlety with which the final basic list of 850 words was assembled and shown in action. Perhaps nothing but experience could have told that *Basic* would stand or fall by what it owed to Bentham's suggestions concerning the breaking-up of the English verb system.⁴

The starting-point is the statement that the fundamental operators, e.g. *put*, *take*, *get*, refer to simple operations not necessarily specified as to direction, end-point, &c.; to introduce a semantic element of direction, e.g. *in*, *out*, *up*, *down*, many languages have combined operator and director as a verb, e.g. *insert*, *deduce*. English has, it is claimed, reached a stage where the 2,000 main Indo-European

¹The most useful ancillary books to *Basic English* are Ogden's *The ABC of Basic*, London, 1932, and *The Basic Words, a Detailed Account of Their Uses*, London, 1933; and for a most valuable general survey of *Basic*, see J. C. Catford: 'The Background and Origins of Basic English', *English Language Teaching*, Vol. V, pp. 36-47.

²J. R. Aiken: *Little English*, New York, no date.

³C. K. Ogden: *Jeremy Bentham 1832-2032*, London, 1932, pp. 37-8.

⁴Op. cit., p. 44, gives a fuller account of this principle. Still more complete is Ogden's contribution (in English) to *Actes du deuxième congrès de linguistes, Genève*, 1931, Paris, 1933, pp. 72-108.

verbs can be eliminated by substitution, e.g. of *put in* for *insert* and *take out* for *deduce*. The question which needs asking here is whether the kind of simplification brought about by the 'translation' of normal English into Basic really leads to good or easy language learning. Palmer¹ was impressed by Basic; in his view its outstanding merit lay in 'the idea of relatively long plateaus containing relatively few linguistic symbols', i.e. in the very wide semantic range of the chosen words. This quality was, of course, inevitable, since Basic was expressly planned to be an adequate vehicle for the widest possible range of thought and meaning. It has been estimated that the total number of 'permitted' senses of the Basic list of 850 words is about 12,425,² giving the average number of senses per Basic word as about 14.7. This is a formidable learning burden, and the reduction of the English verb system (as already described) adds to its weight instead of lightening it. A further complication must be added: there is a large and inadequately controlled number of verb collocations which cannot be understood simply by considering the meaning of their component parts—such as *take to*—'come to like', *go on*—'continue' (these will be referred to here as 'opaque' phrases: Palmer³ calls them 'non-normal', but his term is misleading, since they occur very frequently in normal English). They are the 'special uses' listed at the end of each article under the head-words in Ogden's Basic lists; e.g. under *put* are the five special uses:

- put across (an idea or suggestion)
- put up (an argument or fight)
- put (an undertaking) through [though this sounds un-English]
- put off ('postpone')
- put (money) on ('place a bet on')

To these are added further special uses, separately listed as being more elliptical in meaning:

- put one's foot down
- put in for [presumably a job—or does it mean 'request officially'?]
- put words into a person's mouth

and a few more phrases which could more easily be taught and thought of as idiomatic. But to look upon the five 'special uses' as idioms seems mistaken, for *put off* is not different in status from (say) *put on* because of the opaque use of its components any more

¹H. E. Palmer: *The Grading and Simplifying of Literary Material*, Tokyo, (IRET), 1932, p. 9.

²C. C. Fries and A. A. Traver: *English Word Lists*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1950, p. 81.

³In *The Grading and Simplifying of Literary Material*, pp. 26-40.

than (say) *of course* is different in status from *race-course*. Bar-Hillel¹ has attempted definitions of the idiom and the idiomatic sentence in interlingual and intralingual terms respectively: in an idiomatic expression none of the word-sequences corresponding to or correlated with the words in that expression in a dictionary gives a satisfactory translation or a sufficient synonym. This tentative definition brings out the illogical appearance of an idiomatic expression when it is analysed, but it does not help to suggest a distinction between opaque expressions and idiomatic expressions. Yet there is a difference in kind between the two; compare, for instance, 'He *put off* the meeting for a week' with the 'idiom' (so much loved wherever English is being learnt as a second language) 'It is raining cats and dogs'. Ogden's 'special uses' are not idioms of this sort. And as soon as opaque expressions become current, or permissible or essential in a basic word list, it is hard to see that they do other than add semantic units to that list, staying no longer except morphologically beneath the cover of a sheltering head-word. It seems likely, therefore, that the learner of Basic will meet with great difficulty in trying to commit to memory every linguistic item which has received Basic sanction, and may instead have to exercise his ingenuity in introducing elliptical expressions which contain only Basic words, even if the result appears unnatural.

Basic also suffers from over-emphasis upon what would, in conventional grammatical terminology, be called the passive voice, and this introduces a curious element of chance into Basic composition. The paragraphs of Catford's article which (with the exception of the technical term *verb*) are written entirely in Basic² serve to illustrate this point. *Listed* is permissible ('... names of qualities are listed as opposites'), and so are *noted* and *named*, since these forms can be used as attributive adjectives; and, of course, *list*, *note*, *name*, are within the Basic vocabulary. In other words, 200 'General names', listed on page 88 of *The ABC of Basic English*, can be used with the suffix *-ed* to form passives if they are words which can also be transitive verbs (e.g. *act*, *attack*, *burn*). (*Glass*, incidentally, seems out of place in this list, since **glasser*, **glassing*, **glassed* are not in use.) But these, as verbs, seem not to be so wide in range as verbs which are not morphologically also nouns, e.g. *speak* (excluded) against *talk* (included). And as for the 100 'Pictured Things' (*ibid.*), they can indeed take the suffix *-ed* to signify 'with, having what is named in the root', but seem valueless on that count.

¹In W. N. Locke and A. D. Booth: *Machine Translation of Languages*, New York and London, 1955, pp. 186, 192.

²*Op. cit.*, pp. 44-5.

since each is replaceable by a Basic collocation; e.g.

bottle → *bottled*—‘in a bottle’

cart → *carted*—‘going in a cart’

thread → *threaded*—‘with a thread in it’

In these fortuitous circumstances it is hard to see how *listed* in the given example could usefully be looked upon as anything but a verb—or ‘operator’—by the learner of English via Basic.

This dilemma is conveniently illustrated in a chapter from *The Basic Bible*¹, a book taken by some to be the greatest achievement of Basic. (St. Luke, Chapter 8, has been chosen because it contains a good deal of widely-known material, such as the Parable of the Sower.) For the purposes of this work the Basic lists of ‘things’ and ‘qualities’ have been extended to include 50 special biblical words and 100 words frequently met with in English poetry; but since these additions have not, it seems, been published, it would be difficult to check the validity of the statements. However, many opaque collocations are used which quite certainly fall outside the ‘permitted’ lists, and indeed violate the general directions given by the author of Basic:

It is here [in the consideration of a number of metaphorical uses of the prepositional directives depending on less straightforward analogies, e.g. *Go against a friend*] that the teacher must be careful to distinguish legitimate metaphor from capricious idiom.²

We may also quote from the chapter examined:

gave of ‘distributed’

give ear ‘listen’

put out ‘leave land’ (of a boat)

go on ‘continue’

There is also *were laughing* (‘laughed’), which would be unaccountable but for the fact that Basic considers *laughing* an ‘adjective’, occurring in similar structural contexts to, say, *white* or *quiet*. And to these should be added the occurrences of passive constructions; they are indeed formed of Basic elements, but are dismissed as ‘tenses’, not very helpfully, by Ogden himself³ and at least one of his collaborators⁴. A cursory glance at the same chapter in the Revised Standard Version⁵ suggests that the presentation there,

¹*The Basic Bible*, Cambridge, 1949.

²Ogden: *Basic English*, London, 1930, p. 63.

³*Op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁴L. W. Lockhart: *Word Economy*, London, 1931, p. 23.

⁵*The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version*, London, &c., first British edition 1957, pp. 813-4.

though not controlled by vocabulary restriction, is purposefully direct and simple, and avoids the particular involutions associated with the use of the Basic lists. A few verses from each source, set side by side, will help to make this clear:

BB

... And with these words he said in a loud voice, He who has ears, let him give ear.

Those by the side of the road are those who have given hearing; then the Evil One comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not have faith and get salvation.

And those on the rock are those who with joy give hearing to the word; but having no root, they have faith for a time, and when the test comes they give up.

This suggests that simplification, which is an essential part of explanation (whether oral or written), can hardly be achieved in the language classroom if the Basic vocabulary is used. The reason is that this vocabulary is in itself insufficient to do what is required of it, and can reach sufficiency only with the addition of special elements demanded by each situation, and with unnatural contortions of the permitted items.

(To be concluded)



Oral Grammar Drills

HAROLD V. KING

*(Dr Harold King, author of *The Verb Forms of English* [1957] is assistant professor of English and of the teaching of English as a second language at the University of Michigan)*

In learning English, a student obviously has to learn more than just the words. He has to know how each word fits together with other words in syntactical constructions; and for the inflected words he has to know the appropriate form to use according to the meaning and context.

The choice of the proper form of the plural ending, for example, or the past tense form of a verb, or the appropriate case of a pronoun—all these problems are more difficult for the learner and of greater immediate importance in the early stages of language learning than merely building up a stock of vocabulary items.

But it is not enough simply to *understand* how the grammar works. For active use of the language, the student has to practise all the common patterns until he can use each vocabulary item in the right inflected shape and in proper combination with other items without excessive searching and fumbling. No formal study of grammar, however thorough and complete it may be, can take the place of this practice.

The intent of this is not to disparage the value of a conscious grasp of English structure, which many students find interesting as an intellectual pursuit, but only to emphasize the need for habit-formation in language study. In order to develop practical skill in speaking the language, the student must work toward the kind of automatic control of grammar that enables the native speaker to manipulate words with no hesitation and with perfect accuracy.

It is quite possible for a foreign student to achieve this sort of proficiency, even if he cannot arrange to be brought up in an English-speaking environment. What is needed is a varied collection of oral exercises specifically designed to impart fluency in the spontaneous production of the correct forms.

In preparing such exercises, we can draw upon the devices that have been used for many years by those who apply direct-method techniques, and we can take advantage of the more recent develop-

ments by Palmer, Hornby, and others, in the construction of substitution tables, and also the pattern-practice drills worked out by Fries and his followers.

The four types of oral grammar drill described below can thus lay no claim to being new inventions, and they certainly do not exhaust the possible varieties of practice material for the grammar class. But they are rather typical of certain techniques that have proved useful in guiding students toward the confident use of correct spoken English, and they may serve as models for the teacher who wishes to prepare additional oral drills for his own classes.

1. STRAIGHT PATTERN PRACTICE

The simplest type of drill is based on a sample sentence that illustrates the grammar point to be drilled; the sentence is simply repeated over and over with a slight variation in vocabulary content.

As an example, we may have in a dialogue or reading lesson this sentence:

May I have a little more sugar, please?

The grammar point to be practised is the mass construction 'a little more x', where x can be any of the so-called uncountables.

The first step is to have the class repeat the sample sentence after the teacher several times until they can say it fluently. Then the teacher gives the same sentence substituting *bread* in place of *sugar*, and the class repeat it. After a number of such substitutions, the teacher says only the word *milk*, for example, and calls on an individual to give the whole sentence using that word in the substitution spot. As soon as the students grasp what is required of them, the teacher may go quickly round the whole class, giving a different word to each student: *soup, ink, money, music, news, wood, light, time, heat*, and so forth, each student repeating the complete sentence with the given word.

This could well be followed immediately by a similar drill using countable nouns: 'May I have a few more pennies, please?' In this sentence, of course, the variation in vocabulary will entail words like *matches, peas, minutes, biscuits, people, stamps, &c.* The obvious next step would be to alternate or intermix the two classes of words at random, giving one student *music*, the next *stamps*, and so on, to see if they can use *few* and *little* properly. But this is a different kind of drill and is treated below under type 3. Simple pattern practice concentrates attention on merely changing the vocabulary while the grammar remains the same, the idea being to establish the habit of saying the thing in a certain way by sheer repetition.

2. PROGRESSIVE PATTERN PRACTICE

One variation of the simple substitution drill described above requires the student to decide which of three or four different spots in the sentence will accommodate the given word. In effect, he must know the syntactical class to which the word belongs.

Suppose we take as our model sentence, 'She wrote him a letter'. As groundwork for the drill, the students repeat after the teacher as before, but now the variations go as follows:

'She wrote him a letter'. (Students repeat.)

'She sent him a letter'. (Students repeat.)

'They sent him a letter'. (Students repeat.)

'They sent him a book'. (Students repeat.)

Thus, after a few substitutions, the entire content of the model sentence is changed. But the grammatical structure remains exactly the same.

The next step is for the teacher to call on an individual student to repeat the last version of the sentence; namely, 'They sent him a book'. Now the teacher says only the word *gave*, and the student repeats the sentence substituting that word in place of *sent*. The next student is given the word *us* and says, 'They gave us a book'. The drill then proceeds as follows:

Teacher	Student
<i>They gave us a book.</i>	<i>They gave us a book.</i>
<i>A house.</i>	<i>They gave us a house.</i>
<i>She.</i>	<i>She gave us a house.</i>
<i>Sold.</i>	<i>She sold us a house.</i>
<i>Them.</i>	<i>She sold them a house.</i>
<i>A book.</i>	<i>She sold them a book.</i>
<i>I.</i>	<i>I sold them a book.</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>I sold her a book.</i>
<i>Read.</i>	<i>I read her a book.</i>
<i>A story.</i>	<i>I read her a story.</i>
<i>Him.</i>	<i>I read him a story.</i>
<i>Told.</i>	<i>I told him a story.</i>

This sort of exercise requires a little more coaching on the teacher's part before the class understand what is expected of them. But it is well worth the trouble. Compared with straight pattern practice, this technique has the advantage of providing drill in a greater variety of grammatical material with the same investment of time. The students must keep alert in order to follow the changes in the model sentence. (Even the teacher may occasionally lose track of it.) It should be emphasized that this is an *oral* drill. The

students do not use their books, and nothing is written on the blackboard. The teacher, of course, must refer to the book or at least follow a written outline of some kind.

3. SUBSTITUTION-CONCORD DRILL

A somewhat easier variation of the substitution drill, but one that still requires active use of a grammatical pattern, is the substitution-concord drill. This is not a very good name for it, but the procedure is quite simple.

The first step is to have the students repeat a few examples of a given sentence pattern such as the following:

The letter was there, but nobody noticed *it*.

I was there, but nobody noticed *me*.

The children were there, but nobody noticed *them*.

Your brother was there, but nobody noticed *him*.

You and I were there, but nobody noticed *us*.

As soon as the students can say the examples fluently in imitation of the teacher, they are given only the first few words (one of the italicized expressions) and asked to reproduce the entire sentence. The main difference between this and straight pattern practice is that each student must make some kind of grammatical change in the latter part of the sentence according to the phrase given to him. Obviously this is where the notion of concord comes in.

This kind of drill can be used very effectively in practising the irregular verbs. We have all seen classes in which a great deal of time is spent memorizing and reciting the principal parts of verbs. A bit of this is very fine, but we need some practical way of bridging the gap between merely learning the forms and actually putting them to use in spontaneous conversation. One class I recently visited was using the following as a good example of this type of drill:

They're eating the same thing they ate yesterday.

They're writing the same thing they wrote yesterday.

They're buying the same thing they bought yesterday.

The exercise was done completely orally, without using the books or the blackboard. The students simply repeated the model sentences several times and then were called on to substitute various other verbs, such as *made*, *drank*, *did*, and so on. The grammar point involved is not exactly concord, but it is the same basic idea as the pronoun drill given above.

4. QUESTION-AND-ANSWER DRILL

A somewhat more natural situation can be simulated in the concord drill by putting it in the form of questions and answers. The

following example shows how this device can be used in drilling the pronouns:

1. Why doesn't Mr White play something for us?
—He forgot to bring his music with him.
2. Why don't the children play something for us?
—They forgot to bring their music with them.
3. Why don't you play something for us?
—I forgot to bring my music with me.
4. Why doesn't Alice play something for us?
—She forgot to bring her music with her.

After repeating two or three questions and answers after the teacher, the students are ready to try just giving the answer when the teacher reads the question. As different noun expressions are substituted in the subject spot, the students learn and overlearn the proper use of *she-her-her*, *they-their-them*, and so on. Some teachers follow the plan of having these drills prepared in multiple copies to be distributed to the students after they have practised them orally in class. There is no way to be sure that the students will use such aids for further oral practice outside of class. Obviously a written assignment is much easier to check. But those students who are seriously interested in learning to speak English should at least have the opportunity of doing something that will help them on toward that goal. The results will show up in the form of greater fluency and accuracy in spontaneous conversation. The pleasure of seeing a pair of conscientious students improving their free time by drilling each other on these patterns is ample reward for the effort expended in preparing the exercises.

There are many variations of each of the four types of drill described above, and something of the sort can be devised for almost any grammatical problem the students may encounter. Unfortunately very few of our textbooks provide exercises of this kind. The reason may be that they require a great deal of time, and the proper apportionment of class time to the many necessary activities of the English course is one of the most serious problems we face.

This problem can be partly solved by having tape recordings made. Those schools that are fortunate enough to have this sort of equipment can then provide extra drill outside of the regular class hour. The drills must still be done first with the teacher to be sure that everyone knows how to go about it properly, but it is not necessary to continue the repetition to the point of boredom for the better students in order that the slower ones may be brought up to the required degree of mastery.

In spite of the time they require, oral grammar drills can accomplish the goals of this part of the course more efficiently than the repetition of rules. I recall that a French teacher once remarked to our class, 'If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, the direct object comes before the indirect'. We knew the rule perfectly well, but we still made the mistake. Perhaps we had spent too much time learning the rule and not enough on practising the examples.

The Teaching of Reading

L. A. HILL

English spelling is highly unphonetic, as every teacher of English as a foreign language very soon finds out (in the following words, for instance, it is impossible to find a pair that rhymes: *enough, through, bough, dough, trough, thorough*). It is therefore no use teaching pupils the alphabet and then hoping that they will be able to use it to read words with a correct pronunciation. Even the so-called Phonic Method, in which the letters of the alphabet are called by 'phonetic' names, does not help very much: /kə/—/æ/—/tə/ as names for the letters C, A and T may be better clues for reading the word *cat* than the names /kei/—/ei/—/tɪ:/ are; but what about such cases as /i/—/kə/—/ɛ/ for *ice*? One of my children (she is six years old) is learning to read by the Phonic Method in her school, and I can observe, at first hand, how even a child whose mother tongue is English is baffled by the lack of regular correspondences between spelling and pronunciation in English.

The answer is the Word Method or the Sentence Method of learning to read: the children are shown pictures of objects whose names they are very familiar with from their oral work, and the name of each object is displayed underneath it. The children learn to associate the picture, the meaning and the pronunciation (with all of which they are already familiar) with the written shape of the word. The same can be done with short sentences, such as *This is a dog*, accompanied by a picture of a dog with an arrow pointing to it. The children do not analyse the word or sentence into its

¹In this article, phonetic symbols are enclosed in slanting lines //, while spellings are given in *italic*.

letters: they learn to recognize it by its general shape. They learn to distinguish one word from another by their different shapes. For instance, *cup* has a line sticking down, whereas *cub* has one sticking up.

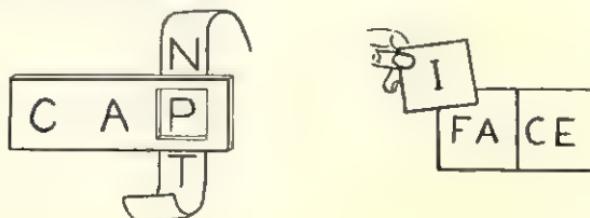
Later the children begin unconsciously to associate certain recurring shapes with certain recurring sounds (e.g. *ca-* with /kæ/, -*ce* with /s/, *ch* with /tʃ/, &c.), and they thus begin to build up a store of associations which help them to tackle words which they have not previously met on the printed page. The teacher can help the pupils to form these habits by giving them suitable groupings of words: e.g. *cat, can, cap; ice, nice, face*¹, without going into boring and useless talk about 'rules': the children will form the necessary habits without any theoretical talk, just as they learn to associate a certain kind of bell noise with the ice-cream man, another with the telephone, another with the excitement of a fire-engine, and so on.

This means that we should start, not by teaching children the alphabet, but by teaching them to read: they need not learn the alphabet until they reach a stage where they want to look things up in a dictionary (a dictionary is arranged in a certain alphabetical order, and unless the children know what that order is, they will have difficulty in finding their way about it).

During a course I recently ran for training teachers of English in new methods, I set out to give a demonstration of teaching reading in this way. I had asked for a class of children who did not know our script at all (their own language was written in the Devanagari script), but who had had a few lessons in oral English. When the class arrived, however, I discovered that they had already been taught the English alphabet.

On the spur of the moment, I decided to give them a Russian lesson, using cursive script and replacing the letter *o*, which resembles the English letter and is usually pronounced in rather the same way, by a more difficult symbol of my own invention.

¹This sort of work can be made more interesting by the use of simple aids made out of paper or thin cardboard. Suggestions can be found in F. G. French's excellent 'The Teaching of English Abroad' (Oxford University Press, in three parts). Here are two examples:



I began by teaching the children a few Russian structures and a handful of words purely orally, by touching and pointing to things while I talked about them (*This is a pencil, That is a table, &c.*). I had already done a little of this oral work with this same demonstration class in English, so they knew the technique of listening carefully to what I said, watching what I did, and then beginning to copy my words and actions as and when they felt ready to do so (it is very important to allow pupils to *listen* as long as they like before expecting them to speak: forcing them to speak prematurely only gives them practice in hesitant, unfluent speech, which does them no good at all).

When most of the class were responding fluently and without hesitation to the situations I was creating by touching and pointing, I began to draw pictures—near the left edge of the blackboard—of the things I had been teaching them orally (a pencil, a table, &c.). Under each picture I wrote in Russian *This is a pencil* (or whatever the picture showed). Then on the right-hand side of the blackboard, I wrote *That is a pencil, &c.* in Russian, with an arrow pointing from each sentence in the direction of the picture it referred to. Immediately, the pupils started 'reading' the sentences, or rather, looking at what I had written and at the pictures, and responding to the latter, using the sentences I had taught them orally, and associating the sounds and meanings with what they saw written on the board.

I continued this 'reading' practice for several minutes, and the links in the pupils' minds between the shapes of the written sentences and the pictures and sounds which went with them grew stronger. Then I rubbed the pictures out and continued the reading practice. The memory of the pictures remained as a help to the readers, but they now had to notice the shapes of the written sentences much more carefully than before. Finally, I rubbed everything out and rewrote the sentences on the board in a different order, asking the pupils to read them out and to create the situation each sentence referred to (e.g. as they read *This is a pencil* each pupil had to touch or hold up his or her pencil).

Naturally there were some mistakes (the Russian words for *table* and *chair*, for instance, looked very similar, and this caused some difficulty to the less observant children), but very few if one considers that 30 minutes earlier none of the children had ever heard or seen a word of Russian. If the class had been one I taught regularly, I would naturally have spread this work over much more than 30 minutes. I would probably have devoted several periods to purely oral work before ever beginning reading practice; and I

would have gone through the various stages of introducing the reading more slowly and carefully. However, even though, because of the needs of the demonstration, I rushed the class through the stages, it was clear that the method worked with conspicuous success, and that it enabled the majority of the class to learn to read fluently, within the limits of what they had previously learnt orally, right from the beginning (one should remember that every time a pupil blunders his way through a reading exercise that he has not been trained to read, he is training himself to read badly: one does not learn to read fluently and well by reading hesitatingly and badly: the only way to learn to read well is by having practice in reading well; and making children spell out what they are reading letter by letter and syllable by syllable is a sure way to turn them into bad readers).

Before children begin to read, one can start training them in those habits of careful observation that are the basis of fluent, accurate reading (and of good spelling, too). One can do this by, for instance, giving them several pictures which are identical except that one of them differs from the other in a rather minor detail. The children then have to spot the difference. Most children I have come across love this kind of game and are eager to shine at it. Practice greatly increases the speed with which they are able to spot the difference, and the habits of quick and accurate observation which they learn so enjoyably from such games are carried over to their reading, so that, for example, they unconsciously notice such things as the difference between *b* and *d*, or that between *c* and *e*.

Before condemning children as bad readers, a teacher should try the experiment of using this method: it may not, after all, be their fault that they cannot read fluently, but the fault of the method he is using.

At what age should Language Study begin?

MICHAEL WEST

I deal here with certain points raised by Mr L. A. Hill of Delhi in a letter printed in *English Language Teaching*, Volume XIII, No. 3. He protests at my 'attack on Dr Penfield's neurological theory that the infant brain is peculiarly absorptive of language' (*E.L.T.*, XII, 4).

In deciding whether foreign language study should be begun in the Primary School or in the High School, we are not so much concerned with 'neurological theory' as with (a) the actual measurements made by the Experimental Psychologist, and (b) the practical implications of the earlier start.

The facts are of two kinds:

- (i) Measurements of the development of learning ability, and
- (ii) Achievement tests in foreign language comparing the progress of the Early Beginner with the Late Beginner.

The facts regarding the development of general intelligence and learning ability are fairly well established and may be found in any book of Educational Psychology. They are thus stated by Vernon (*Measurement of Abilities*, p. 70): 'The year by year increase of intelligence in an average person seems to be reasonably constant from about 3 to 10 years after which the rate of increase diminishes and the M.A. [Mental Age] units become progressively smaller until a constant level is reached in the neighbourhood of 15 years.' Thompson (*Instinct, Intelligence & Character*, p. 221) gives the peak as 14, 15 or 16. The age at which deterioration begins has been set at about 40; but the tendency is to postpone this age to a considerably later date. This point was discussed in *The American Weekly* and a summary of the article may be found in *The Reader's Digest* (February 1959). A summary of scientific studies of the subject is given in the report of the Conference on Ageing held at the University of Michigan in June 1958. The most quoted reference on this point is 'Adult Learning' (E. L. Thorndike). There is no evidence that the specific memory and other abilities required in language learning run counter to the development of general intelligence; indeed the coefficient of correlation of test results of linguistic factors with 'g' (General Intelligence) is high: 'Different tests may differ considerably in their g saturations . . . French, English, history and the like are also [with Classics] highly saturated'. (Vernon: *op. cit.*, p. 142.)

In spite of these facts there remains a very widespread popular belief that the young child is a particularly gifted language-learner as compared with the later beginner. Parents point to the remarkable way in which the young children of Europeans in India or in Africa 'pick up' the native language, and similarly the young children of Indians, Africans and other races who are transplanted into an English-speaking environment.

This phenomenon is due not to the special aptitude of the child but to the exceptionally favourable circumstances of his learning; the older learner would, with his more matured intelligence and

learning ability, excel the child if he were given the same circumstances; but he very seldom is.

The ideal requirements for language-learning are—

1. *Strong Motivation.* Unless the young child alone in a foreign group acquires the language of his playmates he cannot join in the activities of the group in which he is a very small minority. (There is no such motivation in classroom learning at an early age.)
2. *Realistic Learning.* The young picker-up is learning the language in a real environment with real things and actual actions (not in the sterile environment of a classroom).
3. *Practice in Speaking.* The young picker-up of language is speaking in dialogue—one person to one person—or one person (himself) to various members of a group (whereas in the classroom the pupil is one of thirty or more speakers. In the classroom, allowing for teacher-talking-time he gets one-thirtieth of 30 minutes Individual Pupil-talking-time (=one minute per hour) and Mass drills are not so effective as actual one-to-one conversation).
4. *Spaced Practice.* The major problem in language work is (not Learning but) Not Forgetting. The curve of forgetting (found in every textbook of educational psychology, e.g. 'Memory' by Ian M. L. Hunter, Pelican, page 29ff) shows a very rapid initial fall in number of items still recalled which very gradually flattens out so that more is forgotten in the first hour or few hours after learning than in the subsequent days. The picker-up is using the language on and off all day and every day so that he is constantly being reminded: his loss by forgetting is very small compared with the classroom child who has one class period with all the rest of the day to forget it in, and all Sunday as a help in forgetting the week's work, and periodical holidays and vacations to ensure the maximum possible loss.

The 'remarkable' achievement of the young learner as noticed by 'parents, teachers and educational administrators' is, we believe, due simply and solely to these enormous advantages. These advantages are not always found in the case of the immigrant. The immigrant is sometimes handicapped by just this fallacious delusion which we are discussing—the belief that he is 'too old to learn', that childhood is the only effective period for language learning. More important than this, he tends to be one of a group and to spend much of his time speaking his own language to other members of the group: he may even form an encysted foreign settlement impervious to linguistic assimilation. The correct adult parallel to the child picker-up would be the Indian or African wife of an English-speaking person introduced into an all-English-speaking

environment. Here she would have the same favourable circumstances as the child, with the more developed intelligence of the adult in seeking out every opportunity of converse, as well as a more conscious motivation. Given the same circumstances the older learner must inevitably prove superior.

We have shown that none of these favourable circumstances apply to the *young classroom learner*. He has no strong motivation (save in an exceptional case noted below); his environment is unrealistic, a mere injection of foreign language into his mother-tongue world. He has far less opportunity for practice; his practice is not spaced, so that he loses much by forgetting. Inevitably, considering the lower stage of his mental development, he is a less effective learner than the older child—as is confirmed by an elaborate investigation of this exact point detailed in the report of the American and Canadian Committees in Foreign Language Study (The Macmillan Co., 1931): ‘Achievement Tests in Foreign Language’, by V. A. Henmon. The achievements of Early Beginners and Late Beginners are compared, and it is to be noted that Early Beginners tend to be pupils of private fee-paying schools and of rather superior social and educational origin. Professor R. Herndon Fife sums up the outcome of these researches, made in England, Canada and U.S., as follows: ‘The results [of tests] reveal that by the end of 4½ years the group which began in Secondary School had overcome the initial advantage of the other two groups [of earlier beginners] and the norms of all three tended to be the same.’ (page 72). ‘Reviewing all the evidence available in the various reports, the conclusion seems inevitable that a later beginning is more desirable.’ (page 73).

The factual evidence of these tests is thus all against the early beginning; but Mr Hill implies some general educational and perhaps political reasons for the early beginning. In spite of the Primary School pupil’s disadvantage as a language learner compared with the older pupil, it may yet be necessary or desirable to introduce the language at the earlier stage so as to increase the tendency of High School pupils to pursue the study or in some way to facilitate their work. We have to consider the practical implications of this.

The ideal requirements of foreign language teaching are (i) a small class, (ii) a well graded class and (iii) a good teacher. Classes in Primary Schools in the city tend to be large, and all Primary classes tend to be ill-graded, containing some pupils who are incapable of mastering the speech of a foreign language, some who might acquire no more than a usable reading ability, and some who cannot hope even to do that. Moreover a considerable proportion of the

pupils where primary education is compulsory or at any rate free are such as will not need English in their later lives.

The pupils may not in fact need English, may not have any prospect of being able to learn it; but their parents may think otherwise. A correspondent from Canada tells of an almost hysterical demand for foreign language study in the junior classes, and the same phenomenon may persist in India. This writer as an Inspector of Schools remembers when, unexpectedly approaching a Primary School from the back, he was greeted by a shower of English books thrown out of the windows: the British government discouraged English teaching at the Primary level. Perhaps this belief in the special aptitude of the young child as a language learner is one of those delusions so deeply rooted that it must perforce be humoured.

If this is to be done the major problem would be the supply of English teachers. The supply of good English teachers for the High Schools is very inadequate; if those available are to be spread out over the Primary grades the situation would become even worse than it is. BUT, if that supply of teachers in the High School is so inadequate, we might perhaps take advantage of this demand for English in the Primary grades to economize the time of the English teacher in the High School. It would save a great deal of the precious time of the English teacher in the High School if his pupils came to him already able to read sufficiently to make use of a textbook. No great measure of skill or knowledge is required in the Primary Teacher in order to achieve this.

There are two difficulties here. Even with a course which aims merely at reading ability there must be some oral beginning, even if it is no more than that contained in the first twelve Berlitz lessons or Palmer's Practice Book Lessons 1 to 5: ('This is a/my . . . , Show me . . . , Where is . . . ?, There is a . . . on/in/ . . . ' ; &c.). Perhaps with a very simple 'Teacher's Book' the untrained teacher might be able to do this even if the pronunciation will need a lot of correction later on. Teaching to read after this initial oral stage is mainly a matter of a textbook such as the New Method Primer or other no doubt better books aimed primarily at reading. The difficulty is to get the teacher to stick to that aim and not to attempt to produce active uses of the language with which he is unqualified to cope. For this reason it is undesirable that such a Primary Reading course should go very far. The further it goes the greater is the danger that the teacher will take to the sterile methods of the inadequate language teacher, formal grammar and translation, and not only waste the time of his pupils but engender also a distaste for further

study. Something of the sort suggested above, an initial purely reading course going no further than a vocabulary of some 300-400 head words with no emphasis on or test of the active use of the language, might be helpful in acting as a placebo for the public and a stimulus to, as well as time-saver in, later study in the High School.

We have, in conclusion, to consider a special case in which active study of the language in the early stage is necessary in spite of the cost to the pupil. He could learn the language much more rapidly and effectively if he started later but he *must* learn it now. This special case is, of course, the multilingual area and one in which the native language is incapable of dealing with the content of even the most elementary education. All the children must learn English in order that they may be taught through the medium of English. Such children are inevitably handicapped as compared with the unilingual child of an adequate mother-tongue. Many who can ill afford the time have to learn two forms of expression where the other child can do with one. But, although their learning-ability is below its peak, they have this one advantage with the other child—intense motivation; even at this early age they know and feel how essentially necessary it is: in this respect they are in the position of the picker-up who must speak or starve.

In the Classroom

No. 7: Pattern Practice or 'The Parson's Cat'

R. A. CLOSE

'The Parson's Cat' is a game we used to play in my family when we were very young. My father taught it to us, as he had been taught it when *he* was a child. Today, it would be called Pattern Practice and would be made into an exercise that could be useful, enjoyable, mechanical or dull. For us, as children, it was merely a game that we liked. If anybody had told us it was Pattern Practice or Substitution Drill, we might have given it up at once. Or if an expert on language learning had tried to explain to us, in linguistic terms, what it was we were doing, we would not have understood a word he was talking about. None the less, we learnt a lot about English through playing 'The Parson's Cat' and similar games, even though Pattern Practice and Substitution Tables were quite unknown to us.

In this article, I want to tell you how 'The Parson's Cat' is played, so that you can use it as an exercise. It can be as easy as winking. Now it is much easier to wink than to tell somebody *how* to wink or to describe the physiological, neurological and other processes involved. If you want to teach somebody to wink, the simplest way is to say, 'Look at me. Do this', and then do it yourself. Similarly, the easiest way to teach 'The Parson's Cat' is to begin playing it (we shall see how in a moment), and not to tell your pupils how it should be played, still less to explain the process linguistically.

The process is fully explained, illustrated and exercised in 'English Pattern Practice', a textbook produced by the staff of the English Language Institute at Ann Arbor, Michigan, under the supervision of Dr Robert Lado and the guidance of Professor Charles C. Fries. That book demonstrates one of the fundamental truths of language learning. The preface expresses that truth in a paragraph which needs and deserves to be read very carefully, and which explains in technical language what we were doing, without knowing it, when we played 'The Parson's Cat'. You, as teachers, should know exactly what you are doing when you are conducting pattern practice or playing this game, even if your pupils need not; so you must understand the paragraph in question thoroughly.

Here it is:

'A volume of pattern practice material with an *entirely ORAL procedure* was developed in 1949 by Robert Lado. This volume by Robert Lado, besides applying a technique which dispensed with written materials, was built upon the principle that to establish new language habits the practice must shift *from* exercises in which the attention is centred upon simple imitation and a repetition of the pattern through a conscious choice of the elements of the structure to be learned *to* exercises in which *the attention centers upon a variety of lexical meaning substitutable in the structural frame.*'

In other words, my father did quite right in teaching us 'The Parson's Cat'.

He taught it to us, not by telling us *how*, but by getting us to begin. He started simply by saying, 'Now let's play "The Parson's Cat".' The name, the *sound* of it, attracted us. With our attention held, he would begin:

The Parson's cat—is an ANGRY cat.

Then my mother sitting next to him in the family circle, would say:

The Parson's cat—is a BLACK cat.

Next my sister, the eldest of us, who had played the game before, called out:

The Parson's cat's a CLEVER cat.

After that, my father said to the next in the circle, 'Now it's your turn. You say something beginning with "d"'; and the game continued thus:

The Parson's cat's a DEAD cat.

an ENGLISH cat.

a FUNNY cat.

a GOOD cat.

a HUNGRY cat.

an INTELLIGENT cat.

And so on, through the alphabet. For 'X', a word beginning with 'ex' was allowable; 'z' we were allowed to miss. If a younger member of the family were to say, for example, 'The Parson's cat's a HARD cat' the others would protest, 'You can't say *that*—it doesn't make sense.' On the other hand, 'a FAT cat' was considered sensible enough, but somehow not very good; whereas 'a FRIENDLY cat' won general approval, no doubt because it fitted much better into the rhythm of the sentence. And 'GOOD cat' pleased us more than 'FAT cat' because it avoided two occurrences of the same sound close together. We had, and wanted, no rules to guide us in our likes and dislikes.

Suddenly, as in a traditional village dance, someone would introduce a variation which everybody else would imitate. Perhaps we had exhausted our stock of ordinary adjectives. Possible variations might be:

The Parson's cat's a CITY cat.

a COUNTRY cat.

a VILLAGE cat.

The Parson's cat's AMUSING.

BEAUTIFUL.

CLUMSY.

Or, when we began to get too good at the game,

The Parson's cat's ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL

BADLY BEHAVED.

CAREFULLY TRAINED.

DREADFULLY THIN.

One of these variations was:

The Parson's cat's a NUISANCE.

This made us laugh, but it seemed to put an end to the game. I imagine someone must have said 'No, that won't do—you can't say, "The Parson's cat's a nuisance cat".' For the same reason we

did not feel happy about 'The Parson's cat's AFRAID'—'an afraid cat' did not sound right. We objected more strongly to 'The Parson's cat's UNDER the table', without thinking it was even funny. That we all agreed, did not tell us what KIND of cat it was, or what it was LIKE.

We also took it for granted, without any thought of the grammatical importance of it, that though we could say 'The Parson's cat is an angry cat' or 'The Parson's cat is angry', we could not say 'The Parson's cat is an angry'. Furthermore, we could say that it was 'a town cat', but not that it was 'town' or 'a town'.

Now if anybody had interrupted our game to point out to us that we were compiling a list of adjectives, or that nouns functioning as adjuncts do not always behave in the same way structurally as 'pure adjectives', or that some adjectives are used predicatively but not attributively, we would have lost all interest. Such grammatical explanation may have helped us to understand the language much later; and it may or may not help you to teach it. All I want to say is that we formed the habit of putting words into the right patterns without that explanation.

Earlier, I said that the sound of 'The Parson's cat' attracted us. That is an important thing about language which we are apt to overlook. 'Parson' would be found very low down in most word-frequency lists. It is neither a common nor an essential word; and part of our business as teachers of English is to make certain that our pupils know the common and essential words in English before they are bothered by rarer and more fanciful ones. But in the process of teaching a selected, graded vocabulary, let us not take all the magic out of the language. 'Word-magic'—to quote an expression often used by C. K. Ogden, the inventor of Basic English—can make language meaningless. A little of it now and then might do no harm, but could make language appealing—like poetry, which consists very largely of word-magic anyway. 'The Parson's cat' had such an appeal for us: it was like an incantation. It might not have the same effect on others. Yet it is quite possible that something in that particular combination of sounds might attract other people in more or less the same way as it attracted us.

The important thing in such a game is to have a formula that children like repeating, and to avoid using one they find dull. (An example of utter dullness would be 'The teacher's book is a brown book'.) If 'The Parson's cat' does not arouse their interest, choose something else that will. In any case, while a rhythmical and interesting formula might be more important to *them*, what should concern *you* as their teacher is *the structure of the phrase* (The Parson's cat,

the —'s—, the so-and-so's what-do-you-call-it) which you will be drilling. The whole game, in fact, is pattern practice or structure drill in which the children's attention is concentrated on 'a variety of lexical meaning substitutable in the structural frame'.

Another game of the same kind we used to play began with the formula:

I went to market and what did I buy? I bought—some APPLES. Notice the possibilities for structural drill in the following answers:

- an atlas, an axe, an arm-chair, an air-gun, an armful of flowers.
- a bucket, some bread, some biscuits, a bag of flour, a bottle of milk, a bathing-costume.
- a cake, some chalk, a pound of cheese, a cake of soap.
- a doll for the baby, a dozen eggs, a dining-room table.
- some eggs, an extra bottle of milk, an evening dress.
- some fruit, some fish, some firewood, a fishing-rod.
- some glasses, a glass dish, a guide to London.

The framework also lends itself to useful variations, which you can introduce whenever you feel a change is needed. For example:

I am going to market and what shall I buy? I'll buy—

When I go to market, what do I usually buy? I usually buy—

When my mother goes to market, what does *she* usually buy?

She usually buys—

When (If) I go to market, what shall I buy? I'll buy—

If I went to market, what should I buy? I'd buy—

Another of these games began:

My brother Bob plays the big bass drum. How does he play it?

He plays the big bass drum ANGRILY.

How else does he play it? He plays the big bass drum BADLY, CAREFULLY, DIFFERENTLY, EASILY, FAST (note), GLADLY.

A variation of this could be: HOW, WHEN or WHERE does he play it? That could produce:

He plays the big bass drum ABOMINABLY.

He ALWAYS plays the big bass drum.

He plays the big bass drum ANYWHERE.

He plays the big bass drum BEAUTIFULLY.

He plays the big bass drum BEFORE GOING TO BED.

There is much to be said for repeating 'the big bass drum' every time, instead of replacing it by 'it', partly for fun, but largely to emphasize that the verb and object remain unseparated. This could apply also to further examples:

He NEVER plays it NOW.

He OFTEN plays it. (or He plays it OFTEN).

He plays it SADLY.

He plays it SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK.

He SOMETIMES plays it.

He SELDOM plays it.

He plays it WELL.

A fourth game could run as follows:

Where do you come from? I come from AUSTRIA; I am AUSTRIAN; I can't speak English very well; I speak German. I come from BURMA: I am BURMESE; I can't speak English very well; I speak BURMESE; and so on, through the alphabet.

Here are two more ideas, not involving alphabetical progression

(i) The President arrived (will arrive) at the airport (station) at EIGHT O'CLOCK (FIVE PAST EIGHT, TEN PAST EIGHT, (A) QUARTER PAST EIGHT, TWENTY PAST EIGHT, &c.) in the morning (in the afternoon, in the evening, at night).

(ii) How long have you been in London? I have been here (for) ONE DAY only: I arrived YESTERDAY. (Suppose yesterday was Tuesday) I have been here (for) TWO DAYS: I arrived THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. I have been (for) THREE DAYS: I arrived LAST SATURDAY. (After one week, say THE MONDAY BEFORE LAST. After two weeks, extend the period one week at a time, and say TWO WEEKS AGO.)

But be careful. Do not let this become too humdrum, and do not play the game too often. There are many other things to do in language study—including careful written work. Personally, I would use these exercises as recreation and revision, and as a competition between teams, in the last ten minutes of a lesson, or after the examinations when the term's teaching is over. Let it be an activity which the pupils can look forward to. The examples I have given, you may have noticed, contain constructions which students are constantly getting wrong. One way of correcting those mistakes is to make the students write out the correct construction fifty times. They usually hate doing that—and still go on making the mistakes. But in games like these they will enjoy using the right formula a hundred times, correctly. However, make certain the formula is used correctly, especially in the following examples:

The Parson's cat.

What did I buy? I bought—

I usually buy—

She usually buys—
If I go—, what shall I buy?
If I went—, what should I buy?
He plays the big bass drum BADLY.
He NEVER plays the big bass drum.
Where do you come from? I come from Brazil.
I can't speak English very well.
He arrived at the airport.
How long have you been here? I have been here (for)—
I arrived last Saturday.

The Questionnaire

At the moment of writing (11th August, 1959), a trickle of answers is still coming in, mainly from the remoter countries, and we expect an appreciable number more. Please do not hesitate to post your answers because you have seen this report. Since, however, the Questionnaire leaflet was issued as long ago as January, 1959, we think it high time to say something about the size and nature of the response.

Three hundred and twenty-four leaflets have so far reached us, of which four times as many are from men as from women. More than half of our correspondents are over forty, and one-fifth are over fifty. There have been no replies at all from readers under twenty, i.e. from young teachers being trained or still new to their careers. Do they read *English Language Teaching*?

Teachers were asked what kind of pupils they teach. More than half have mixed classes (i.e. boys and girls together) and rather more teach at elementary or intermediate stages than at an advanced stage. However, two-thirds of these teachers have taught pupils at stages other than the one they are now concerned with. About one-seventh teach adults. A quarter inspect or supervise the work of other teachers.

Replies were sent in by twenty-five non-teachers.

There were hardly any answers from occasional readers. Of those who say how long they have been subscribers, about as many have been subscribing for less as for more than five years. One-fifth have been subscribers for more than ten years.

Most correspondents lend their copy of *E.L.T.* to friends, nearly all keep their copies for reference, and rather fewer than one-half discuss the contributions with other readers.

More than half say that 'Question Box' is a useful feature, a somewhat smaller number mention articles, just over eighty mention reviews, and twenty-nine mention correspondence. A large number say that all these features are valuable. 'Question Box' is a first preference twice as often as 'Articles'.

The suggestions made in answer to Questions 14 and 15 are extremely numerous and varied. A great many are of a general kind—for instance, that there should be more articles on teaching English: there are ninety-five requests under this heading. More than seventy readers are interested in literature, half

of their requests being for articles on methods of teaching it and half for articles of an informative type (especially on literature of today). About fifty suggestions concern points of grammar or syntax, in particular tense usage. An appreciable number of readers want to hear about new trends in vocabulary and idiom. Ten want more articles of regional appeal, while five would like this kind of article dropped: these would doubtless not appreciate an article on 'The Quickest Way to Teach Conversation to — Ladies'. Twenty readers are anxious to see the Reviews section enlarged—'Many a time', says a Spanish reader, 'I do not know what to buy, and when I get a book I don't know what I am buying.' Twenty readers ask for articles on British daily life and background, and twenty-four for more about linguistics and phonetics. Ten said they would like to hear about examining techniques, and eight wanted advice on translation.

We have no space, however, to give a just impression of the range and variety of the scores of ideas with which we have been showered. We can only say that we have noted and will continue to note our readers' wishes, and will give them the fullest possible consideration. *English Language Teaching* is not, however, meant for any particular country or kind of English teacher: it tries to include something for everybody and everywhere.

Not the least encouraging result of the Questionnaire is that the names and addresses of nearly three hundred potential readers have been sent in: we have written to them.

Finally, we should like to thank all those who have answered the Questionnaire. We find both their praise and their criticism an encouragement.

W. R. L.

Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and cordially invite correspondence, although no guarantee of publication can be given. If you write to us, please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. R. D. Eagleson writes from New South Wales: I appreciated Dr Churchward's concise statement on 'The Structural Uses of *It*' which appeared in *E.L.T.* XIII, 3. I would, however, like to comment on one aspect, in which Dr Churchward himself showed some hesitation.

In endeavouring to interpret *that* in such sentences as 'It was on Monday that they came', Dr Churchward proposes, 'as far as one can see *that* is not a relative pronoun . . . and we seem forced to regard it as a conjunction' (para. 29, page 104). As a result he is compelled to regard *it* in such sentences as both anticipative and discriminative. It seems to me that we are not necessarily forced into this conclusion. Could not *that* in these sentences be equivalent to what was traditionally known as the relative adverb?

E.g. I was out of town (on) the day *when* it happened.

That is the house *where* I was born.

C.f. He fell ill the night *that* we went to France.

If this be so, then *that* is no different here from the other instances in which it could be replaced by *who* or *which* (see para. 27), and *it* consequently remains

solely discriminative. This certainly would be the case in the following example:

X: They came on Monday, didn't they?

Y: No, I am certain it was Tuesday that they came.

It is the time that we are bringing into prominence, not the action.

[Dr Churchward replies: Mr Eagleson's suggested interpretation of *that* after a discriminative *it*, when the word or group of words brought into prominence is adverbial, is one that I had thought of myself but had finally abandoned. I abandoned it because, although it seems reasonable enough when the adverb or adverbial equivalent is temporal or even local (as in 'It was in Cairo that we met'), it does not seem to be applicable when the adverb or adverbial equivalent is of some other type. See, for example, the quotations from E. W. Smith, Laski, and Macaulay, in para. 35 of my article, and the following: 'It was at the behest of Mussolini that Dollfuss had destroyed their powers.' (G. E. R. Gedye, 1938.) 'But instincts have to be educated, and it is as an educator . . . that the Supreme Court has done the finest service to the nation.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/6/57, leader.) 'It is in order that the government of the country may be really representative . . . that this struggle for the vote is going on.' (Mrs Pankhurst, 1908.)

However, I do not regard myself as having spoken the last word on the subject; and I shall be grateful to Mr Eagleson or anyone else who may be able to throw further light on it.]

2. E. M. Anthony, Project Director, Southeast Asian Regional English Project, Thailand, writes: As a member of the staff of the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan, and one who had a minor part in the preparation of the texts reviewed in *E.L.T.* XIII, 3, I was most pleased with the favorable review they received. I note that the reviewer states that 'much of it is potentially (if not actually, in its present form) as useful for Indo-China as it is in Peru. . . . I should like to note that the University of Michigan now is carrying on a program in Indo-China (Thailand, Vietnam and Laos) and has put the volumes in question to good use. We would agree, of course, that modification for specific use here is necessary and this is in process.

One other point I should like to comment briefly upon is the use of *passive* as a term side by side with '*be + ed/en*'. I would suggest that the former, a term of meaning, is not so sound as the latter, a description of *form*—and here is precisely the point where the term *passive* gives some difficulty. Perhaps an anecdote will make my point clear.

A lady, having purchased a new lipstick, took it home. Upon removing it from the package, she dropped it, and it cracked into two pieces. Being a grammarian, she immediately returned it to the store with the statement, 'It was broken when I got it home.' The sales person rewarded her with a new lipstick. He assumed that *broken* was a class 3 word ('adjective'), whereas it described a 'passive' situation, and hence was class 2 + *ed/en*. The system endorsed in the Michigan materials would perhaps make the distinction clear: one meaning is *be + class 2 ed/en*, the other *be + class 3*.

3. Dr G. Jo Steenbergen writes from Belgium: In the Question Box of *E.L.T.* XIII, 3, p. 120, it is said that the compound *do-gooder* 'was probably made up by the writer of the article' in the *Observer* of August 31, 1958, referred to in the question.

I am afraid that this is not quite correct. No doubt the author of the answer was right in saying that 'it is not a normal English word', as he presumably

had *British* English in mind. But the word is fairly normal in *American* English. Here are four examples, unfortunately all of them taken from the same source, but by different writers, as the examples come from different sections of the magazine:

- (a) '... a conscientious do-gooder who actively aids many a fund drive and charitable organization.' (*Time*, June 1, 1959, p. 53, col. 3.)
- (b) '... Twain proceeds to let the hot air out of do-gooders, religious humbugs and assorted hokum peddlers.' (*Time*, April 4, 1959, p. 55, col. 2.)
- (c) '... how Khrushchev has posed as both do-gooder and demon in waging his war of nerves over West Berlin.' (*Time*, July 13, 1959, p. 30, col. 3.)
- (d) '... a onetime police chaplain bitterly denounced as "coddlers" lenient judges, over-sympathetic Youth Board workers, and professional do-gooders who seem "obsessed with the senseless theory that there is no such thing as a bad boy".' (*Time*, September 14, 1959, p. 21, col. 3.)

As to the meaning of the word, *E.L.T.* was certainly right. A do-gooder is 'someone who is zealous to improve people or conditions', i.e. a philanthropist. Very often, if not usually, it has 'a slightly disparaging ring about it,' as is shown clearly in examples (b) and (d), and also more or less in (c).

This 'ridiculing effect' seems to be suggested by the odd formation of the compound itself. Normally one would expect *good-doer* contrasting with the generally accepted *wrongdoer*. The latter compounds clearly refer to a doer of good/wrong, i.e. one who really does it. In *do-gooder*, on the other hand, the person referred to is *not* made the subject of an action. That is why the compound insinuates that such a person does not actually *do* good, he only pretends to do good, he is always talking about doing good, but somehow he is incapable of really doing so—which arouses contempt.

Plausible though this interpretation may be, the compound *need* not have that disparaging ring, as follows from example (a) where the word is used without any pejorative meaning. This, however, is only one example out of four.

The word is not to be found in *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, concise edition, copyright 1956, which might indicate that it is a neologism.

[Dr Wood replies: I am grateful to Dr Steenbergen for his correction. It seems clear that *do-gooder* is fairly common in America, and the writer in the *Observer* was probably copying American usage. As for the reason why it usually has a disparaging ring about it, it may be as Dr Steenbergen suggests, but still we ask, why? It is perhaps not irrelevant that a number of Verb-Object compounds (without the suffix *-er*) have pejorative associations; e.g. *tell-tale*, *spoil-sport*, *know-all*, *turn-coat*, *sawbones*, (slang for a doctor), *kill-joy*. It seems almost as if this particular order has some suggestion of dislike, contempt or ridicule attaching to it. Secondly, I am not sure that Dr Steenbergen's comparison with *wrongdoer* is really valid, for a *wrongdoer* may be a person who does wrong on one particular occasion, and a *good-doer* (if such a word existed) would have the same limited application. But the meaning expressed by *do-gooder* is different (though I am not so sure that it implies that he only professes to do good, without actually doing it). I think the *-er*, in this case, is not an agent suffix at all, but rather that it is comparable to the *-er* in such compounds as *a tip-topper*, *an all-rounder*, *a first-nighter* (one who makes a habit of going to the first night of plays), and *a twicer* (one who goes to church twice every Sunday).]

All these denote a person in whom the attribute in question is the significant, and a more or less permanent, characteristic. And so we may think of a 'do-gooder' as a person who adopts as his motto 'Do good', and is obsessed with a desire to carry it out in season and out of season, and irrespective of whether people want good done to them or not. It would be interesting to know who coined the word, and in what circumstances. The motto may have been suggested by the Biblical precept 'Do good to those which hate you', and a person who rather consciously and ostentatiously tried to put this into practice would lay himself open to the charge of trying to demonstrate how good a Christian he was, while lacking that humility which should characterize the true Christian.¹

Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

We shall do our best to deal with the ever-increasing number of questions which our readers send in, but we cannot promise to answer them all.

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.* for October-December, 1957 (pp. 24-25) you state that *say* means 'merely to utter or express in words, and denotes an activity on the part of the subject *without reference to any other person* to whom the words may be directed.' But I may say 'I said to him, "I am going away soon"'. Here, surely, there is a reference to someone else besides the speaker, and this would seem to contradict the explanation given above. Could you make it clearer for me? I may say that I agree with your observation (in the same answer) that *tell* always implies a personal object.

ANSWER. It is true, of course, that normally, when we utter or express something in words (i.e. when we *say* something) the remark is addressed to another person, either one actually present, one at the other end of the telephone line, or (in the case of the written and the broadcast word) one present in the mind of the speaker. The point is that the existence of this other person as the object to whom the words are directed is not implied in the verb *say* itself, any more than *write* implies the existence of someone who is to read what we have written. A person may shut himself in a room, with no one else present, and *say* a piece of poetry (i.e. utter the words). When a doctor who is examining a patient's throat asks him to say 'Ah', all he wishes him to do is to make the sound; when we *say* 'Amen' at the end of a prayer we are merely uttering the word; when we remark 'He says *will* when he means *shall*' we merely mean that he uses the word *will*, just as when we ask, 'Is it correct to say "It is me"?' we mean, is it correct to use that grammatical construction? The existence or otherwise of someone to whom they are used is totally irrelevant.

QUESTION. How can the use of the singular noun *sort* in 'these sort of children' be explained?

ANSWER. There is nothing strange about the use of the singular *sort*, followed by a plural noun; it is used regularly. We ask, 'What sort of novels do you like?', 'What sort of cigarettes do you smoke?', 'What sort of flowers are these?'

The question is rather, how can we account for the plural adjective *these* before the singular noun *sort*? Logically, of course, it is wrong, and on this ground it is often condemned by purists, but the fact remains that it is very frequently used, even by careful writers and speakers. All we can say, therefore, is that it is justified by usage, and is probably due to the influence of the plural noun that follows. It would be very unusual to find *these* when the plural noun precedes the demonstrative (*children of this sort*, not of *these sort*).

QUESTION. In the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* I find the following two sentences put under the same pattern. 'I asked him how to do it' and 'I told (showed, taught, &c.) him how to do it.' To me the meaning seems quite different. What, therefore, is the justification for classifying them together?

ANSWER. The difference lies solely in the first half of the sentences (*I asked him* and *I told him*); the rest (the infinitive part) is the same in both cases. In both it means 'the method of doing it' and in both it is used as an object.

QUESTION. In such sentences as 'I am well', 'All is well', the word *well*, we are taught, is a predicative adjective. This sounds rather strange to me, for in my own language (Italian) the corresponding word, even when used in a similar way, is an adverb. I am aware, of course, that *well* is also used adverbially in English. Are there any other words of the same sort that can be both adjectives and adverbs?

ANSWER. As you are probably aware, there are a number of words that can be used as both adjectives and adverbs, e.g. *hard, fast, late, high, low*, but these are not exact parallels to *well*, as, when employed as adjectives they can be used both attributively and predicatively, whereas *well* can be used only predicatively. The nearest parallel is *ill*. This, like *well*, when applied to a person, can be used only predicatively; we can say that a person is ill, but we cannot speak of an ill person. Unlike *well*, however, it can be used attributively when it qualifies non-personal nouns, e.g. *ill health, ill counsel*.

QUESTION. In a British newspaper I have found the sentence 'We have only two alternatives: either we have got to accept . . . or we can attempt . . .' I should have thought the two courses (either/or) made up one alternative. Is it I that am wrong, or is the newspaper?

ANSWER. It is true that we say 'You have the alternative of either accepting . . . or attempting . . .', where the two courses open are regarded as constituting one alternative. But we can also speak of each course as an alternative to the other. Thus in examination questions of the 'either . . . or' type, we can say, 'You cannot do both questions; they are alternatives', and on being presented with one course we may ask, 'What is the alternative?', meaning, what other course is open to me? We are really using the word in two different senses: (a) a position where one has a choice, (b) the individual things or courses between which one can choose. There may also be another reason why the author of the article spoke of 'two alternatives'. Although, by derivation, the word should refer to two things only, usage no longer restricts it to that number; we may speak of 'several alternatives'. The writer wished to make it clear that the choice lay between two, and two only.

QUESTION. I have had some difficulty in analysing the following sentences. What name or term should we apply to the italicized parts of them? '*As to Ruth, she was dressed in black as usual*', '*They were quarrelling as to which was right*', '*A heated discussion arose as to how it was to be done*'. Should the *as to* combination be styled a compound preposition?

ANSWER. It seems best to regard *as to* as a compound preposition, though the second and third sentences fall into that class where it is what Fowler (M.E.U.) calls 'a slovenly substitute for some simple preposition' (in this case *about*). In the first and second sentences the expression is adverbial; in the third it seems to be adjectival, amplifying *discussion*.

QUESTION. What description can be given to the italicized parts of the following sentences? (i) She died *a widow*, (ii) Little wonder *he was so late*, (iii) I don't wonder *she wants to know*.

ANSWER. (i) The words *a widow* might be called a pseudo-complement. The sense of the sentence is 'She was a widow when she died'. That is to say, what is notionally the complement of one verb has been attached to another verb, to which it does not really belong. The construction is not uncommon in English, though an adjective is more frequent than a noun as the pseudo-complement: e.g. *She married young*, *He came home drunk*, *She went away a schoolgirl and returned a young lady*. (ii) The sentence is parallel with the commoner *No wonder . . .*, and both are to be explained in the same way, viz., as ellipses of 'It is no wonder' and 'It is little wonder'. The italicized words constitute a noun clause in apposition to the introductory *it*. (iii) Where the verb *to wonder* is concerned two different constructions must be distinguished. (a) When *wonder* means *ask oneself*, as in the sentence 'I wonder where that path leads to', or 'I wonder whether John will be there', it is a transitive verb followed by an indirect question as its object. (b) When *wonder* means *marvel* it is intransitive and is followed by an adverbial construction indicating the thing or the fact that causes the wonder. When a noun, a pronoun or a gerund is used for this purpose it must be preceded by the preposition *at* to make an adverbial phrase: e.g. 'We all wondered at his skill', 'I don't wonder at her wanting to know'. When a clause is used the preposition is not expressed, but the sense of it is still there, since it expresses the fact that one wonders *at*: e.g. 'I wonder he wasn't killed', 'I wonder you allow him to do it'. Your third sentence therefore falls into this class.

On the face of it it may seem absurd to give a cause for one's *not* wondering, but the construction has probably grown up by analogy with the positive *I wonder*, where it is, of course, quite logical. *I wonder* is felt to mean 'it is surprising' (if this substitution were made, of course, there would be no question of 'cause', since the subordinate clause would be in apposition to *it*); the opposite idea of 'it is not surprising' is then expressed by *I don't wonder*, *You can't wonder*, &c.

QUESTION. In the questionnaire recently issued with *E.L.T.* I find the sentence 'Whether you take *E.L.T.* regularly or not, we invite you to help us bring it closer to you . . . by replying to these questions.' I have also come across other examples of *help* followed by the infinitive without *to*, e.g. 'I want to help solve this problem.' In Eckersley's *Commercial English*, on the other hand, all the examples given have the infinitive with the *to*, while Zandvoort's *Handbook of English Grammar* (p. 12) says 'To help, usually with *to*, except in American English.' Which is right?

ANSWER. *To help* followed by the infinitive without *to* is now admitted in British English, and its use is spreading; but it is not always correct. We should, for instance, scarcely say 'Constant practice will help you acquire the correct pronunciation'. The construction without the *to* seems to be confined to those cases where helping involves actually sharing in the task. Thus *Help me lift this box* implies that the person to whom the request is addressed is to do some

of the lifting along with the other person: and similarly with *I helped him mend his car*, *The Government should make its main job to help find new markets for our products*. But in acquiring a correct pronunciation constant practice will not do some of the acquiring; that must all be done by the learner.

There is a discussion of the question under the heading 'Points of Modern English Syntax' in *English Studies* (Amsterdam) for June, 1950.

For foreign students of English, who may not be sure when the construction without *to* is acceptable and when it is not, it is perhaps best to avoid it. That with *to* is never incorrect.

QUESTION. 'At a sitting of the Constituent Assembly not less than three-fourths of the total number of members is required to constitute a quorum.' Is the singular verb *is* in this sentence correct, and if it is, would it be wrong to use the plural *are*?

ANSWER. *Is* is correct, and *are* would be wrong. It is true that we should say 'Three quarters of the apples *were* bad', but this is not because of the word *three*, for we should also say 'A quarter of the apples *were* bad'. In such cases we think of a number of individual apples (or other countable things), and so use a plural verb. But in the sentence you quote, three-fourths of the total number is another number, thought of as a single collectivity or mathematical quantity. The total number *is* forty. Three-fourths of the total number *is* thirty.

QUESTION. Is there any difference between 'compared to' and 'compared with'?

ANSWER. 'Compare to' means 'draw a parallel, or state a likeness between': e.g., Shakespeare compared the world to a stage. A complex sentence may be compared to a tree, with the main clause as the trunk and the subordinate clauses as the branches. 'Compare with' means 'To examine one against the other, noting both resemblances and differences (usually with emphasis on the differences)': e.g., Compare this with the other, and you will soon see which is the better of the two. The profits show a considerable increase, compared with those of last year.

QUESTION. Is there any derogatory connotation attaching to the expression 'to be involved in'? In other words, would it be safe to say 'He was one of the men involved in this wonderful achievement', or is the expression used only of something discreditable?

ANSWER. In the sentence you give we should probably use *concerned* rather than *involved*. Though *involved* is often used in connection with something that is discreditable, it does not necessarily carry this connotation. We may be involved in an accident (which, though it may be unfortunate, is not discreditable), we may become involved in a discussion, and we may say that in the making of a film many people are involved.

QUESTION. The following sentences are taken from Eckersley's *English Commercial Practice and Correspondence*: 'I am pleased to tell you that we had today a letter', '... The telephone conversation we had today', 'The goods were dispatched today'. I notice that Stannard Allen (*Living English Structure*) approves of this use of the past tense for an action completed within a period which is thought of as present, and gives the example 'I saw him this week'. I should have thought it was obligatory to use the perfect in all these cases. Who is right?

ANSWER. The sentences are quite correct as they stand, though the perfect tense could also be used. There is a slight difference of meaning. The perfect tense

represents the occurrence or activity as being contained within the period thought of as 'present' without assigning it to any particular part of that period; the past tense identifies it with a particular moment of past time within the more comprehensive present. Thus in reply to the question 'How long have you been learning English?' we should reply 'I started this term', not 'I have started', just as we should say 'I expected him to come tomorrow, but he came today.'

QUESTION. Which is the correct form of answer to the questions 'What is this?' and 'What is that?'. Should it be 'It's a . . .', 'This is a . . .' or 'That's a . . .?'

ANSWER. To both questions 'It's a . . .' would be the usual answer, though 'That is a . . .' (or 'That's a . . .') could be used for emphasis or to direct attention to the object concerned and single it out from others. For example, the question 'What is this?', asked about the various knobs and instruments on the dashboard of a car, would probably elicit the reply 'That is the speedometer', 'That is the self-starter', 'That is the choke', &c. 'This is . . .' would not be used in a reply unless the question 'What is that?' referred to something identified with the person to whom the question was addressed (e.g., something which he was holding): then it would be correct. Often, however, in casual conversation the reply would merely state the name of the thing without using a verb or a subject: e.g., *What is that?—A pencil.*

QUESTION. Most of my British and German handbooks of English grammar list the verb *dislike* as taking either a gerund or an infinitive, but only one of them gives examples of *dislike* followed by the infinitive: 'I dislike to be (being) stared at like that'. 'Tommy disliked to eat (eating) that soup.' In *E.L.T.*, XI, p. 16, however, you say that *dislike* is found only with the gerund. Would you please comment on this disparity of opinion?

ANSWER. The only comment that can be made is that the two examples that you quote with the infinitive sound very strange and would not be accepted as idiomatic English by most native speakers of the language. I have put them to several, and they are unanimous in condemning them. For the first we should say 'I dislike being stared at like that', while for the second it is doubtful whether *dislike* would be used at all. If it were, the construction would be 'disliked eating', but most people would say 'did not like to eat' or 'did not like eating'. You do not say what book your examples are taken from. The fact that none are given in the other books you have consulted suggests that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find any, and the one you quote from is rendered suspect by the fact that the author uses *eat* in connection with soup. It suggests that his command of English idiom is a little 'shaky', for not many English people would speak of *eating* soup. Of course, it is often possible to find odd examples of unidiomatic constructions even in the writings of 'good' authors, but that does not invalidate the distinction between what is generally accepted and what is not.

QUESTION. (a) 'Your face wants lifting'. What does this mean? (b) What is the plural of *lazy-bones*?

ANSWER. (a) 'To have one's face lifted' is a beauty-parlour term meaning to undergo treatment to have the wrinkles, &c. smoothed out from the skin. (b) The plural of *lazy-bones* is the same as the singular: 'Hurry up, you two *lazy-bones*'. The same principle applies to other compound nouns where a plural is used to denote one person: e.g., *butter-fingers* (a person who is always dropping things), *sly-boots* (a sly or cunning person).

QUESTION. Can the word *to* be omitted after *explain*? Is it possible, for instance, to say 'Will you explain me the rule?'

ANSWER. No; *explain* cannot take an indirect object without *to*. We must say 'Will you explain the rule to me?'

QUESTION. Hornby (*Guide to Patterns and Usage*, 21d) gives the sentence 'I shall need only an hour to finish the job'. Fitikides, on the other hand (*Common Mistakes in English*, No. 153) says 'Don't say *I shall need an hour to do that*. Say *It will take me an hour to do that*.' These seem to contradict each other. Which is right?

ANSWER. It is unfortunate that Fitikides gives the impression, though no doubt unintentionally, that *need an hour* is always incorrect. It is not, but it does not express quite the same meaning as *It will take an hour*. A very common error amongst foreign students of English, whom Fitikides had in mind, is to use the former where the latter is needed, and it was against this that he was warning them. When we wish merely to say how long the work is likely to occupy us we say *It will take me an hour to do that*. *I shall need an hour* means that I must be allowed that amount of time; consequently we should use this expression only when we were planning out our time, or asking someone else to allow us the time we think necessary. E.g. 'You could probably complete the job if we relieved you of other duties between nine and twelve, couldn't you?'—'No. I shall need at least five hours'. It is rather like the difference between a thing *costing* me five pounds (the price I must give for it), and my *needing* five pounds to pay for it.

QUESTION. In a speech delivered by Joseph Chamberlain at the annual dinner of the Royal Colonial Institute in London, in March 1897, the following passage occurs, which rather puzzles me. 'I do not say that all our methods have been beyond reproach, but I do say that in almost every instance in which the rule of the Queen has been established, and the great Pax Britannica has been enforced, there has come with it a greater security of life and property, and a material improvement in the condition of the bulk of the population. No doubt in the first instance, when these conquests *have been made*, there *has been* bloodshed, there *has been* loss of lives amongst those who *have been sent out* to bring these countries into some kind of disciplined order, but it must be remembered that that is the condition of the mission we have to fulfil.'

I can understand the use of the present perfect tense in the first sentence, as the speaker is talking about the present result of a process, but I find it hard to account for its being used in the second. Can you be of help?

ANSWER. The past tense (*were made*, *was*, *was*, *were sent out*) would probably have been better. It would be interesting to know whether the speech was read from a previously prepared script, or delivered from notes, the speaker framing his sentences as he went along. The probability is that it was the latter, in which case it would be quite easy to slip into the perfect through the influence of the perfect forms in the previous sentence, and this may be the explanation. But even if the past is to be preferred (and I think Joseph Chamberlain would have used this if he had written the text of his speech), it is possible to defend the perfect on the ground that it is what is often called 'the perfect of experience': i.e. that it represents not what happened on one occasion, or even on a series of occasions thought of separately, but what, in the speaker's knowledge or experience, has happened repeatedly: e.g. 'When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept' (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*). 'Industry has been progressively mechanized during the past hundred and fifty years; and in every case when

machinery has been introduced it has at first been opposed by the workers'. In such sentences *when* is equivalent in meaning to *whenever*.

QUESTION. On page 219 of *Living English Structure* Stannard Allen says that with prepositions the use of *which* should be discouraged in favour of *that*, and gives the examples *The book that you were looking at* or *The book you were looking at* (with no introductory relative word at all). There is no example with *which*. On the other hand E. V. Gatenby, in his *Direct Method English Course*, Bk. II, p. 65, Lesson 13, says 'There's a good concert in the Town Hall which we can go to in the evening'. With many examples on p. 70 he encourages the use of *which* in such sentences, but never of *that*. Which is correct, and what is the difference?

ANSWER. First, to say a practice should be discouraged is not the same as saying it is definitely wrong. Secondly, Stannard Allen is speaking only of defining, or restrictive, clauses, i.e. a clause that distinguishes a particular one, or particular ones, from others: thus in the sentence you quote, the book *that you were looking at*, and not any other book. But (with a few exceptions, which need not trouble us here) *that* cannot be used for non-defining, or non-restrictive, clauses: for these *which* is necessary. We cannot say *Manchester, that is the centre of the textile industry*. . . . There are some clauses which are on the borderline between the two, and then the tendency is to use *that* or *which* according to whether we feel that they tell or do not tell us anything material about the noun they qualify. In the sentence you quote from Gatenby the relative clause does not really tell us anything at all about the concert, beyond the fact that it is somewhere we can go; hence the tendency to use *which*. Indeed the sentence is not really concerned with the concert, but with how we can pass our time. On the other hand we should, I think, say *There's an art exhibition at the Town Hall that you'd probably be interested in*, because here the relative clause does tell us something about the nature or character of the exhibition—it is one that would interest the person to whom we are speaking. There is one other point. *That* is much more closely bound to its antecedent, and usually occurs immediately after it. Consequently there is sometimes a tendency to avoid *that* if the noun immediately preceding it is not its grammatical antecedent. For example, we should say *the room that was damaged by fire*, but we might be reluctant to say *the room in the house that was damaged by fire*, as this might suggest that the relative clause referred to *house*. It is not quite so ambiguous if we use *which*.

In *E.L.T.* for Autumn 1952 there is an article 'That and Which as Relative Pronouns'. You might find this of interest.

QUESTION. In *Essential English II*, Lesson 3, there is the phrase 'boil the kettle for tea'. Is it common in English to boil the vessel instead of its contents, or is this use infrequent?

ANSWER. 'Boil the kettle' is quite common, but the transitive use is not found very frequently for other vessels. A housewife might sometimes speak of boiling a saucepan, but only, I think, if she were boiling water or milk in it, not if it was vegetables that were being boiled. Much more frequent is the intransitive use, with the name of the vessel as the subject: 'The kettle is boiling', 'The saucepan boiled dry', 'Keep the pot boiling' (the last being used metaphorically more often than literally).

QUESTION. In one of the conversations in the 'What to Say' series broadcast by the B.B.C. it was stated 'Schoolchildren call their men teachers "sir", though

women teachers are never called "madam". How, then, does a child address a woman teacher? 'Yes, Mrs So-and-So', 'No, Miss So-and-So'? This would surely sound rather awkward during a lesson.

ANSWER. Many children, especially from working-class families, simply use 'Miss', even to married women teachers, though this is not considered socially correct and is generally discouraged. In girls' grammar schools and high schools the mistresses are usually addressed as Miss or Mrs So-and-So, though a teacher in one such school tells us that there, because of the awkwardness of a constant repetition of the name, they ask the girls not to use anything after their replies to questions, but to say 'Miss or Mrs So-and-So' when they themselves address a question to the teacher or when they speak to her out of class. This, however, may not be the practice in all schools.

QUESTION. Is it wrong to say 'Which lesson did you have yesterday'? Is the right form 'Which lesson had you yesterday'? Should *to do* never be used with the verb *to have*, or does this apply only when *to have* is an auxiliary?

ANSWER. 'Which lesson did you have?' is correct. 'Which lesson had you?' is wrong. Similarly we should say 'What did you have for breakfast?', 'Did you have a good holiday?', 'When did you last have a letter from him?'. The question is a rather complicated one, and would take far too much space to discuss here, but it is dealt with in an article '*Have and Do Have: Their Use in Negative and Interrogative Sentences*', in *E.L.T.*, April-June, 1955. Broadly speaking, *do* cannot be used if *have* could be replaced colloquially by *have got*; and it is never used when *have* is an auxiliary. It should be noted, however, that in American English *do have* is quite normal in certain contexts where it would be incorrect in British English: e.g. *Do you have any brothers or sisters?*

QUESTION. In *Essential English II*, Lesson 4, p. 28, I find the sentence 'Terrible weather we are having, isn't it?'. How am I to explain this irregular question tag to my pupils?

ANSWER. It is not really irregular, though it may appear so at first sight. The sentence is not an inverted form of 'We are having terrible weather', which is presumably the way you have read it, and which would, of course, require the tag 'aren't we?'. It is an ellipsis of 'It is terrible weather (that) we are having'—hence the tag 'isn't it?'.

QUESTION. Some verbs have a meaning for the past participle which they haven't in other forms: e.g. 'He is not supposed to clean the boots' (C.O.D.). I find no explanation in the C.O.D., however, for the word *supposed* as it is used in the following two sentences, the first taken from an American short story and the second from the *Daily Herald* of April 20, 1959: 'You are not supposed to leave your bicycle before our window' (from the context the meaning here seems to be 'You are not to'), 'The prize isn't much, is it?—It's not supposed to be'. Could you give a list of such forms and explain their meaning?

ANSWER. Your quotation from the American short story does not mean quite the same as 'You are not to', for it would be quite possible to say 'You are not supposed to leave your bicycle before our window, but you may do so so far as I am concerned.' It would be rather impracticable to compile a list as you suggest, for it would be endless; and in any case, the sentence quoted from the C.O.D. covers most of the examples that could be included, as indeed it also does your other two. The basic idea is 'should, according to some rule, regulation, instruction or accepted convention'; e.g. We are supposed to be at work by nine o'clock, Shopkeepers are not supposed to sell cigarettes to

young children. Members of certain religious bodies are not supposed to drink alcoholic liquor. It may, however, shade off into something akin to intention, as in the quotation from the *Daily Herald*, or in the sentence 'Is this drink supposed to be coffee?', 'Is that story supposed to be funny?'. There is often the suggestion that the rule or regulation is not strictly observed or enforced, or that the thing in question falls rather short of what it is 'supposed' to be.

QUESTION. Is it wrong to say 'Since when do you know him?' According to *E.L.T.*, Vol. XIII, p. 122, the only correct form is 'Since when have you known him?' but on page 121 of Ralph Cooke's *Notes on Learning English* there is the sentence 'He can't get about much since he had that accident', and my feel of the language tells me that it is permissible to use the present tense here. Am I correct?

ANSWER. (i) 'Since when do you know him?' is incorrect; the only correct form is 'have you known?' (ii) *Can't* is permissible, though *has not been able* would also be acceptable. The two, however, do not mean quite the same. *Has not been able* would refer to his inability throughout the whole period; *can't* refers to his present situation, and then refers it back to the point in the past from which it originated. It is, that is to say, a kind of inclusive present, which applies also to the past as far back as the point indicated, and will presumably go on applying in the future. Similar instances are: I am nervous of crossing an icy road since I slipped down and broke my leg. She doesn't know us since she came into her fortune. In such sentences, it will be noticed, the *since* clause indicates not merely time, but also cause, or implied cause.

QUESTION. According to authoritative English grammars *must* cannot be used as a past tense in main clauses; yet in a reader for German schools I found the following sentence, where *must* is a past tense: 'With heavy heart the knight must agree.' As the text is written by an English author I should like to know whether the use is right or wrong.

ANSWER. In the absence of a fuller context it is difficult to give a definite answer; there may be particular circumstances in the passage that would justify it, but taking the sentence in isolation it would certainly seem that *had to*, *was compelled to* or *felt obliged to* would be better English. Incidentally it may be noted that *must* may be used as a past tense in main clauses when it is employed to express impatience or annoyance: e.g. It must start to rain just as we were setting out for our walk (suggesting a kind of perversity on the part of the elements), My husband must start to re-decorate the bathroom just when we had visitors coming (suggesting annoyance with the husband).

QUESTION. The following sentence is taken from an English text: 'India is coming to think that her many races and peoples can look after themselves with less help from Britain than they have had in the past.' I think that the use of the present perfect *have had* is incompatible with the word *past*. Or is the sentence correct?

ANSWER. The sentence is correct as it stands, since no definite point of time in the past is specified, nor is 'the past' cut off and distinguished from 'now'. It means 'the period of time stretching backwards from now'. It is contrasted, that is to say, not with the present, but with the future. Similarly we can say 'We have achieved much in the past, and we may hope to achieve even more in the future.' The perfect tense is excluded only when 'the past' is thought of as a period stopping short of the present: e.g. In the past domestic labour was plentiful and cheap, but for some years now it has been expensive and almost impossible to obtain.

Book Reviews

THE WEST AFRICAN TEACHER'S GUIDE. J. E. Sadler.
pp. 175. *Allen & Unwin.* 1958. 7s. 6d.

The Senior Lecturer in Education in the City of Birmingham Training College, who formerly was the Senior Lecturer in Education in the Nigerian College of Technology, has produced a most useful book. The ground is covered competently, and every West African teacher should have a thorough mastery of all that is presented here: the teaching profession, teacher training, practical work, the curriculum, teaching techniques, the community, the child's development, learning and personality, the teacher's outlook and aspirations. All good, sound stuff—advice, instructions, explanations. A most *useful* book; but not a valuable one: for on three counts there is failure to achieve more than the level of sound competence. First, though the language is clear and understandable, throughout the ideas expressed are somewhat abstract or are too general; for instance, 'Our definition [of education] is therefore concerned with the intention or aim of those who bring influence to bear upon others'. Second, the book does not seem to be 'West African centred'—the subject is presented as if 'This is Great Britain talking to West Africa about Education'; whereas West African teachers need to think about education in West African conditions—bush schools and lack of books, of light to read by after six thirty, of a quiet place to write in, and often of a table! On the brighter side, African music, physical education, acting in African schools, can be very delightful indeed and can make an important contribution to African children's development. Third, the view of education that is to be inferred from this book is suspect. For instance: 'we may limit it [education] to whatever is done intentionally to influence the thought, behaviour or attitudes of others'—that covers Bill Sykes' efforts, brain-washing, and other evils! For instance, also: 'The first function of the teacher is to communicate'—a view that is more Germanic than British, though Germany now is eagerly following our lead, and is now keener on training, and on developing pupils' abilities and capacities, than on the communication of knowledge. In addition, the author writes of the pupil being '*given* experiences' and says 'there is a body of knowledge *or skill* which the pupil must *receive and absorb*' (reviewer's italics)—occasional evidence of loose thinking. Nevertheless, training colleges will be able to recommend the book to their students, though little help will be found in it for the teaching of English.

A WEST AFRICAN TEACHER'S HANDBOOK. S. A. Banjo.
pp. 224. *University of London Press.* 1953, Reprint 1957. 6s.

This is the fourth reprinting and one can well understand the book's popularity: throughout it is clear, definite and practical. The writer is principal of a training college in Ibadan but that does not necessarily mean that he knows schools from the inside and teachers' difficulties and problems; nevertheless he does. On almost every page there is a most unusual understanding of the classroom and its limitations, and a welcome understanding of the frailty of human nature:

'It is most unwise to place the weakest teacher in the lowest class. . . . This class calls for one of the most skilful teachers on the staff', and 'The tone of a school and the standard of the work done there largely depend on the quality of the headmaster's leadership'. There are two chapters on the teaching of English; these are sound and helpful. Mr Banjo says, for instance, 'It is necessary for children to be made to see their faults (in written work) and to correct them themselves'— few writers on this subject would say 'be made to see', but how right and how sound! This book is indeed 'African-centred' and it speaks directly to African teachers—every African teacher should have a copy of it in his attaché-case, and teachers in other lands would find it helpful too.

THE NEW OXFORD ENGLISH COURSE—EAST AFRICA.

F. G. French. Books 1, 2, Teacher's Notes 1, 2, Wallpictures, (African Edition); Books 1, 2, Teacher's Notes 1, 2, Wallpictures, (Asian Edition); Books 3, 4, Teacher's Notes 3, 4. O.U.P. 1956/7/8. Prices, respectively 1s. 10d., 2s., 3s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 12s. 6d.; 1s. 6d., 2s. 9d., 5s., 5s., 12s. 6d.; 3s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 3s. 6d., 3s. 6d.

This Oxford English Course is designed for young pupils learning English as a foreign language in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar), and is written by F. G. French, whose brilliance as a language teacher is much in evidence in the Teacher's Notes. The existence of two races, with different backgrounds, is recognized by splitting Books 1 and 2 into African and Asian versions, with basic similarity of language and teaching but with different material and pictures and with some difference at the beginning in speed of progress. All the books are clearly printed and attractively produced and illustrated. A limited number of colours is employed for the pictures; this convention, while possibly desirable on grounds of economy, unfortunately gives a somewhat unreal appearance to the people so portrayed.

Both Books 1 (African and Asian) begin with pages of small pictures, corresponding to wall pictures, with the aim of teaching vocabulary in such sentences as: *This is a . . .* and: *There aren't any. . .* Subsequently, special emphasis is laid on teaching the pupils to read, as well as to speak, English effectively. For example, in Asian Book 2 we find exercises like: *Find the answers in the book to the following questions*, and exercises like finding the right word to complete a sentence, identifying pictures from sentences, filling in missing letters, &c. The development of reading skill continues through Book 2. Books 3 and 4 contain conventional reading material with comprehension exercises and drills.

The Teacher's Notes, arranged in books corresponding to the pupils' books, contain detailed advice as to how each 'lesson' in the pupils' book should be taught and, where necessary, as to how many teaching periods these 'lessons' will take to complete. Teacher's Notes 1 to 3 contain, at the beginning, a useful summary of the material to be taught. These summaries show the language items in a carefully graded order, though there is little evidence of this grading in the reading material. For example, the interrogative *WHO?* is used in Book 1 (African), Lesson 25, in questions like: *Who has a new book?*, while *WHO?* does not appear as a teaching item in the summary until Notes 2 (African), Lesson 24. The Notes also contain at the end of each book a useful summary of vocabulary with numbered 'sounds of English' and examples in phonetic script and conventional spelling.

Excellent as the Teacher's Notes are, one cannot help wondering whether

something quite so detailed is strictly necessary. The key to good language teaching is in the properly staffed training college with both initial and refresher courses. If these are what they should be, detailed Teacher's Notes are unnecessary. If, on the other hand, teachers are poorly trained or even unqualified, they will be unable to follow the advice given in the books.

However, this is in general a good set of textbooks which will doubtless be found extremely useful in the countries for which they are intended. Properly used, they will help to provide a sound foundation in English for the young beginner.

THE GROUNDWORK OF ENGLISH STRESS. Roger Kingdon. pp. 239. *Longmans*. 1958. 15s.

This book, one of three recently produced by Mr Kingdon on the inter-related subjects of pitch and stress in English, deals exclusively with word-stress, and is an attempt to formulate a set of rules for the guidance of the foreign learner. It is therefore intended as a practical manual which, notwithstanding considerable reference to the author's *Groundwork of English Intonation*, remains essentially self-contained.

The approach here is primarily an etymological one and accounts for what is, at first sight, the surprising allocation of four-fifths of the book to the study of compound words. By compound, however, the author understands any word that is 'more than a bare root', with the result that *rebel* and *gum arabic*, for example, are both treated under this heading. It is this same etymological approach which permits the three-fold classification of these compounds into:

- (a) *Romanic-type*, in which prefix(es) and/or suffix(es) are added to a 'clearly recognizable root', these affixes not giving 'the impression that they are independent units': e.g. *bravado*.
- (b) *Greek-type*, consisting of two or more 'clearly recognizable roots which, though they have an entity of their own, do not as a rule stand alone as complete words': e.g. *particularize*.

- (c) *English-type*, comprising two or more independent words: e.g. *bakehouse*.

Within the limits set by this approach, the author explains very thoroughly the stressing of these different classes of compound word; rules are set up which, though naturally complex, are nonetheless clear. But there will be some readers who, while agreeing with Mr Kingdon that the reasons for the complexities of our word-stress are largely historical, will at the same time have serious reservations about a methodology which seeks to classify present-day stress phenomena according to historical criteria. Mr Kingdon's methodology, such readers will say, not only involves considering as compound words which, historically compound though they may be, are, for most twentieth century native speakers of English, simple words (e.g. *rebel*); it also leads the author to distinguish between Romanic- and Greek-type compounds, a distinction from which, stress-wise at least, little advantage appears to be derived. Furthermore, and this is perhaps their most serious reservation, an approach of this kind is not best calculated to serve the author's main purpose. For the average foreign learner the history of the English language is a closed book. How, then, can an approach based on historical criteria help the foreign learner to solve his present-day problems in English word-stress, particularly if, as in the case of Asians and Africans, his own language, historically speaking, is totally dissimilar to English?

The opening pages of the book are devoted to general stress considerations,

and here and throughout the book the author very properly lays great emphasis on the inter-relation of stress and pitch. Particularly commendable is the consistent use of tone-marks to indicate degree as well as incidence of word-stress. Essentially the author distinguishes the three degrees of stress with which readers of Professor D. Jones, for instance, will be familiar. Main stress is, however, categorized as *kinetic* or *full static* according to whether it is associated with a kinetic tone or with a high-pitched static (level) tone. This is a useful distinction (in connected speech a word usually retains its kinetic stress in preference to its full static) and one which, as the author rightly recognizes, is a pitch, not a stress, distinction. It is therefore all the more strange that Mr Kingdon, in common with many others before him, should not have recognized secondary stress (here called *partial static*) for what it is: a main stress lacking the pitch prominence of a main stress, whether kinetic or full static. The author expressly associates his partial static stress with a low-pitched, non-prominent static tone but insists that it has a weaker breath-force than a kinetic or full static stress. It is not clear on what basis the breath-force of the partial static stress is adjudged to be weaker; one suspects that this is a pitch, not a stress, judgment.

The last few pages of the book present an analysis of the stress differences between British and American English. Mr Kingdon, with his considerable experience in the Americas, is well qualified to make this comparison. It should be particularly useful to all those foreign learners who, in the course of their studies, are likely to come into contact with American as well as British speakers of English.

Just how highly each individual reader will rate this book will depend very largely on his views concerning the appropriateness, and even the validity, of Mr Kingdon's general approach. All readers will, however, join in congratulating the author, and his publishers, on a well-produced book that is, to all intents and purposes, free from typographical error.

HARRAP'S AFRICAN LIBRARY: SON OF FORTUNE by Mary Downes: **ADAMU AND THE STOLEN CHILD:** by Yar Kunama. **ADAMU AND THE MONEYMAKERS:** by Yar Kunama. About 80 pp. each. *Harrap*. 1958. Each 2s. 6d.

These three stories are to be most highly commended. They have an African setting, a good style and good forward-moving plots. They are just the thing for the early classes of Middle or Secondary Schools. It is such a relief to find originality and robustness in this sort of writing. It would be a pity to use the books as class readers for they make excellent 'library' books. Let us hope for many more books of this calibre for here are adventures that really ring true.

WEST AFRICAN FOLK TALES. H. Vernon-Jackson. *U.L.P.* 1958. Bk. 1, pp. 63; Bk. 2, pp. 62. Each 2s. 6d.

These little books, nicely produced and illustrated, provide two short collections of Folk Tales about Animals (Book 1) and Men and Women (Book 2) that would be useful in the higher classes of the Primary School or for slightly older children in the early classes of Middle or Secondary Schools. The good teacher might use them as the basis for oral lessons such as dramatization. The style is horribly bed-time-storyish, alas, and is, therefore, not at all simple in construction or vocabulary. It is a great pity that authors who set out to write

'simple' stories do not take more care with their choice of vocabulary and, more especially, structure patterns.

TALES FROM THE VELD. Books 1 and 2. W. T. Miller. pp. 72. U.L.P. 1950. Bk. 1, 1s. 6d.; Bk. 2, 2s.

Though these collections of 'true' animal stories have an immediate South African appeal they should be seriously considered as supplementary readers for early teen-age children in all countries. The information is interesting and the presentation in story form is robust and exciting. Here is good, honest straightforward writing published at a price that is more than reasonable.

THE ARCHWAY ENGLISH COURSE FOR BURMA, Book 3.

U Myo Min, William Philipsz and D. Y. Morgan. pp. 194. O.U.P., Calcutta. 1958. Rs. 2. (For reviews of Books 1 and 2, see *English Language Teaching*, Vol. XII, No. 2, p. 74, and Vol. XIII, No. 2, p. 84.)

Book 3 of the *Archway English Course* completes the series and takes the pupil up to the stage at which what he says begins to matter more than how he says it. The earlier books were devoted to the formation of correct speech habits. This one helps the pupil to express his own ideas clearly within the framework of these habits and looks forward, as the preface says, to the cultivation of good habits of silent reading and the beginnings of free composition. Structural progression continues, but at a slower pace. The structures are more advanced than in the earlier books, and more time is therefore given to practising them. There are also several passages of narrative designed for vocabulary increase and for practice in extensive reading.

In this book the scene shifts to Britain, though the link with Burma is preserved through one of the characters in the book who comes to study in London. It is a practical volume, and the series as a whole is a good example of the organic attitude to language learning which is becoming more and more marked all over the world.

READING AND INTERPRETATION. V. C. Bickley and C. Godfrey. pp. 143. U.L.P. 1959. 5s. **ENGLISH THROUGH ADVENTURE.** A. J. Glover. pp. 206. Dent. 1956. 3s. 6d.

Although a cursory glance might indicate that these two books of prose extracts with exercises are somewhat similar, a closer scrutiny reveals many important differences, most of which spring from the greater emphasis given by the authors of the first-named work to the needs of the foreign learner.

Reading and Interpretation is aimed at students in overseas training college or 1st-year university courses, at about the level of the Cambridge Overseas Higher School Certificate. The 43 passages have been well chosen to give a wide range of authors and subjects, and they preserve a fair balance between those with a theme or background of a predominantly overseas character, those of general interest, and those rooted in English life. Some six to eight questions have been set on each passage, and in these too there is a wide range. Some do no more than test comprehension, others aim at expanding the vocabulary of the student; some demand critical assessment of the writing, others are com-

position exercises in which the passage is used as a stimulus to creative writing by the student. Most teachers working with overseas students at this level will find this a workmanlike and sensible book, while their students will enjoy the variety of the passages and of the exercises.

In *English through Adventure* there are 24 rather longer passages, all by well-known writers and all with the sort of adventurous content likely to appeal to the English boy of 14-15. There is no attempt to find passages with a background which might be familiar to the foreign student. The questions follow a standard pattern, giving practice in paraphrasing, vocabulary work, comprehension, précis and composition. They would be useful to teachers working in English-medium schools taking G.C.E. or the Cambridge Oversea School Certificate, but would not be very suitable for the 16-18 age group taking English as a foreign language.

THE NEW OXFORD SUPPLEMENTARY READERS, Grades 1 and 2.

Isabelle Frémont. O.U.P. 1958-59. Grade 1, 7d. each; Grade 2, 1s. 0d. Grade 1: The War Dance, Huffing and Puffing, A Present for Mother, Town Rat and Country Rat, Shall We Meet the Lion?, The Old Woman and Her Cock. Grade 2: The Dog and the Donkey, The Silly Little Mice.

This is an attractively produced series of graded readers intended for young children learning English. The type is large and clear and each book in the series is pleasantly and plentifully illustrated, although the lines of some of these illustrations could with advantage be even simpler and clearer for the age-group concerned. It is intended that the series shall eventually include 'books of six different levels of language difficulty'. The actual examples under review are six readers for the 7-9 age-group (grade 1) and two for the 8-10's (grade 2). The material used is selected to suit the age-group for which each book is designed and includes both new stories and old friends re-told and adapted for the young non-European learner. Each of the Grade 1 books contains 16 pages of text and illustration and the Grade 2 books have 30 pages. This for the price of 7d. and 1s. respectively seems, to the present reviewer, excellent value.

NEW NATION ENGLISH. Series Editor, Professor Bruce Pattison.

Nelson. 1958-59. (Key to New Nation English, by B. Pattison, 35 pp., 4s.; Pre-Reader, by A. Taylor, 32 pp., 3s. 9d.; Teacher's Book to Pre-Reader, by A. Taylor and B. Pattison, 33 pp., 4s.; Book One, by A. Taylor, 45 pp., 3s. 9d.; Wall Pictures, each 2s.)

It is always pleasant to report an advance in textbook writing. Nelson's *New Nation English* is designed for primary schools in Africa. The four books reviewed here constitute the initial stages and will be followed by Books Two to Six, each with its accompanying Teacher's Book. The series is intended to be complete in 1962. There are already a small number of established courses in this field which divide the greater part of the market between them. These existing works differ from each other in comparatively minor ways, so that the choice of a course has until now been a difficult and almost a personal matter.

Textbooks of this kind can be considered under a number of headings, such as approach, content, presentation, and production. *New Nation English* shows an advance in all four of these divisions and especially in presentation and production.

The origins of the course would lead us to expect a sound, modern treatment of the subject. The editor of the series is Professor Pattison, of the Institute of Education, University of London, who is well known as an authority on teaching English abroad. His collaborator is Mr A. Taylor, Director of the Institute of Education, University College of Ghana. Mr Taylor is an educational psychologist widely known in Africa through his *New Nation Arithmetics*, which he regards as material for teaching English and arithmetic at the same time. The combined experience of the authors, and the fact that they are operating through a publishing firm whose African list, particularly in respect of educational books, is one of the most extensive of all British houses, gives them a flying start.

This series of books deals simultaneously at various linguistic levels with the problem of teaching English as a foreign language to school children in Africa from the age-group 5-7 years upwards. Equally important, the course recognizes the likelihood that the teacher using it will have been under-trained and will himself need help in handling its contents. (It is of course essential to use the Teacher's Books, without which the course is meaningless.) The class material itself is kept simple and closely related to an African environment, while the teachers' instructions are firm and detailed. Much of their clarity is due to the use of 'pin-men' drawings, recalling those of I. A. Richards. The language described in this course is a spoken language as well as a written one; the teaching instructions take account of this by making it difficult for even a lazy teacher to avoid giving the pupils a good deal of practice in speech.

In content, the course keeps close to the kind of material associated with the University of London Institute of Education. Vocabulary and structures are graded, and are carefully introduced in a series of many short, interesting, illustrated lessons. The intention is to cover '... speaking, response to spoken English, reading, and writing'. Thus the earliest lessons deal with pattern-matching, both in the visual and in the auditory spheres. That is, training in visual patterns leads towards the recognition and production of shapes, as shapes, although they are also letters. Groups of words beginning with similar sounds establish something of the same kind of discrimination for the hearing of speech.

The Pre-Reader consists chiefly of illustrations, all being of objects familiar even to rural children in Africa. These illustrations are arranged in groups, according to the requirements of the lesson. Examples and verbatim instructions are differentiated in the Teacher's Books by devices such as italic and bold type-faces.

An outstanding feature of the course is its production. The decision to use four colours has resulted in very attractive pupils' books. As yet there are few Africans capable of producing exciting book-illustrations; at the same time we know too well the stereotyped caricature of life in Africa that has been produced by some European illustrators. In *New Nation English* lively, life-like, interesting pictures appear, created by an artist who clearly has personal knowledge of the public the book will reach. The same standard is evident in the wall-charts. An innovation for this kind of book is that the Key and Teacher's Book for the Pre-Reader have been set on a Varitype machine and litho-printed. A foolscap size has been chosen, which is most unusual. Further, the Teacher's Books are bound in separate sheets. This reviewer likes the resulting effect. The advantage may be that the publisher will be more likely to produce revised versions of

individual sheets, should changes be thought desirable in the light of experience, than he would be with an orthodox process involving signatures of many pages at a time.

The teaching of pronunciation is at once so essential and so specialized that it must be treated separately, with its own textbooks and its own classes, instead of being lumped into a course chiefly concerned with vocabulary and grammar. *New Nation English* includes only a very few instructions in pronunciation, doubtless for this reason. But we are told on p. 2 of the Key that the course covers 'the whole range of skills'. It is clearly necessary to add 'Excluding pronunciation' to the first paragraph of the Introduction.

The use of contracted forms, in itself a most laudable inclusion, seems to have gone astray. In the Key to the course we are told that 'the abbreviated form of the verb "to be" is used as being more common in English speech than the full form.' But this omits a subtle but important distinction. It is certainly essential to use and teach the contractions occurring with pronouns (I'm, it's, &c.) and the course deserves praise for having done this. But it is advisable for at least two reasons to keep the full forms in the other cases until a much more advanced stage has been reached, when they can be introduced together with other words having weak and strong forms. The first reason is that the status of the verbal form in 'he's here' is different from that in 'the pencil's here'; the latter is in any case unlikely in the Formal Colloquial style of speech which is normally taken as the model for teaching, although the former would certainly be used. Secondly, the contraction often leads to the formation of consonant clusters difficult for African children. As early as lesson, 6 for instance, the example occurs: 'Mr Smith's a man'. The final cluster -θs is a tough one for children who are mostly unfamiliar with θ and whose mother tongue probably never has two consonants occurring together at the end of a word. The example in lesson 10, 'What's John?' gives -tsdʒ, which is even worse. Perhaps the authors themselves feel some uneasiness, since in lessons 53, 70 and 71 inconsistencies occur such as the following: *Which book's red?* but *Which comb is green?*

The teacher will have some fun with the surrealist items which result from a misprint in lesson 16: *Are you there? No, I'm not here.* Elsewhere, the proof-reading has been meticulous.

In general terms the *New Nation English* course sets a new high standard in primary school English textbooks for Africa. Few of the old-established courses can bear comparison with this elegant new-comer.



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Two new books have been published:

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The Milk of Paradise

T. M. PAIKEDAY

(*Mr Paikeday is a lecturer in English Literature at St Xavier's College, Calcutta*)

The other day when I was packing up my books at the end of a brief but highly educative spell of teaching English poetry at our college in Tiruchi (Madras), I sighed with relief at the thought that I might not have to return to that job again. The experience was indeed 'educative' for me; but, so far as my young students were concerned, had I not been wasting my time?

For example, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* was one of the many poems which it fell to my lot (as it does now and again to the lot of English teachers in all Indian Universities) to teach B.A. and B.Sc. students during the year.

I had taken the trouble to explain to them the poet's own introduction to the poem, the nature of dreams and what light modern psychologists such as Freud have shed on the subject, and what John Livingston Lowes has unearthed (in his monumental work of literary research *The Road to Xanadu*) as to the sources which went to fashion Coleridge's poems. I also told them about Purchas's travel books and read to them (Purchas not being available) relevant chapters from Mr John Masefield's modern edition of *Marco Polo*.

Having thus prepared the ground, I went on to interpret the poem, telling my students why critics like Mr George Sampson consider Coleridge's own introduction mere 'rigmarole', the story of the coming and going of the dream 'a piece of self-deception', that the poem does have a unity in spite of its being called a fragment, and how ably Mr Humphry House has interpreted its imagery and symbolism in his recent 'Clark Lectures' at Cambridge.

I pointed out to them the variations of rhythm, the perfect modulation of vowel and consonant sounds, the KANDSLR-chord of music in the first stanza, the falling-close effect of the fifth line, the romantic suggestiveness of the diction, and how all these manifold elements are organized into a harmonious expression of the central meaning of the poem: the creative activity of the poetic muse.

And then, when the examinations came round, I asked them to write an essay evaluating Coleridge's remarks on his poem.

That I had not been talking over their heads was clear enough by the reasonable answers that at least a dozen of even the average

students produced at the examination. But while it was clear that there was no lack of understanding of the subject, it was forcibly borne in upon me that extremely few of my students were capable of *appreciating* a poem such as this. Not only were their aesthetic sensibilities out of tune with English poetry at its purest, but even their grammar and spelling were unequal to the task of expressing in their own words the little they did understand.

As evidence I give below a sampling of their essays. It is not the work of a single writer: it is a mosaic of my making; but the pieces are the original uncut gems of real life.

One day Coldrige eat some tabulets and sleep. . . . Then he has a beautiful dream dream in his bud. . . . When he was strongly dreaming, he see the pleasure doom in Xanadu and the river Alpha. . . . When he woke up, he wrote his poem in a fragment. . . .

When Kubla Khan built a doom, an Abbyseenion maid sang. But there were no connections between them. . . . These connectionless ideas wandered here and there in the poem. . . . If Coleridge could find out what she sang, then he would build castles in the air, he would drink honey-due and the milk of Paradise. . . .

Kubla Khan is a fragment. There is no end of the poem. . . . Coldrige remarks that this poetry is written by the psychological curiosity. . . . The visions he had moved him greatly his curiosity and jarred by the curiosity he published the song. . . . Coleridge also writes about the fragment. . . . He remarks that this poem is 'A Vision in a Dream; a Fragment'. He remarks like this because he is dreaming. . . .

Of course, there was the usual crop of answers from students who (because they wished to avoid slippery ground, since they had probably not listened in class) had reached for the 'Guides' sold in the market and reproduced from memory the ready-made summaries or paraphrases of the poem. But that was not original work and certainly did not display a personal understanding or appreciation of poetry.

If then, this is the state of poetry-study among our young men in India—why include English poetry at all in their B.A.-B.Sc. English curriculum?

At this stage I can almost see the enthusiasts for poetry raising their eyebrows in mild consternation: why teach poetry at all!

Poetry is 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', it is 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge', 'the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all science. . . . ' Of course, it is all that; and we

know, if not from our own personal experience, at least from reading the lives of the poets, what an educative influence poetry can be on the growing child and man. We know how Wordsworth observed nature, how it worked on his imagination and drew out and strengthened his emotions of love, pain, fear and wonder. Not everyone is born a poet. But what child does not experience

. . . a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

And when, later on, the 'shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy' (while his mind is being crammed with vital information on a variety of useful subjects) if his guardians and teachers will keep him on a regular diet of good poetry, then his finer faculties for perceiving the higher values of life will remain keen and active, being continually whetted by the treasures of the imaginative and emotional experience of the great poets. In short, with poetry in his curriculum of studies, he might be trusted to come out of his education a well-balanced personality and a sane mind in a healthy body, with a taste for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

A grand idea this seems to me, especially when put like that. But pray, what poetry are we talking about and for whom? In this enlightened age, when we not only learn languages but also study them in the light of a new science called semantics, as an effective means of communication, it should be plain that poetry is useful only in proportion as the images, sounds, and rhythms which compose the pattern of poetry are understood by the student. And how many of our Indian students are able, or have been trained, to catch the music and the meaning of the English language?

First, as regards music and rhythm. What Mr T. S. Eliot remarks in this connection must be valid in general for all poetry, not merely modern poetry: 'Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood'; that is, by the power of the rhythm, the imagery, and the suggestiveness of words. Now, when you are trying to read English poetry to one of our college classes, if you pick upon a bright and sensitive-looking lad among your audience and ask him to stand up and read aloud a stanza himself to his companions (say, the first stanza of Shelley's *Skylark*), he will do it in a clear voice, with well-modulated tones and a rhythm which suggests a natural taste for poetry. But alas! his hailing of this 'blithe spirit' will sound neither English nor poetry. The English accents (the basis of metrical rhythm),

loaded with all their rhyme and alliteration, will be dragged about, the verses will lose their shape, the melody of the vowels and consonants will not be perceived, and the sustained music of an Alexandrine will be interrupted. On the English rhythm of the verses our young reader will superimpose (shall we call this a sort of counterpoint rhythm?) the rhythm of spoken Tamil or Telugu or whatever his mother tongue may be. The total effect, pleasing to the ear, leaves you with a longing to hear the same young man reading from one of the poets of his native language. But what you listened to just now was not the ecstatic song of the European species of skylark as it inspired Shelley with its short bursts of melody rising in a crescendo with the bird's own flight upwards, fluttering and pausing and swerving, ending in the long-sustained climax of golden melody expressed in the last line of the stanza.

Point out to our young student such delicate facets of Shelley's artistry; how, for example, there is a change of pace and melody in

Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
to bring out the momentary lull in the force of the West Wind, or
how, in Keats's line

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways,
the rhythm is as sinuous in its movement as the ways, and other examples of sound echoing the sense, and your subtle remarks are sure to fall on deaf ears.

At best, with all their good will, your young listeners will make a note of all this and be ready to repeat it as appropriate annotations in the examination paper.

And it is not only that the music of English poetry is foreign to the untrained Indian ear, but also that its theme and substance are mostly 'exotic' in relation to the Indian mind. As an experiment, try to read to our young man with a taste for poetry the finest example of Keats's 'sensuousness'. He is soon surrounded by

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, . . .

and by now, full of the dewy wine, you have fallen flat amidst the blooms of this Hampstead garden!

Frankly it appears to me that to the average Indian boy or girl who has never lived in the more temperate climes with their clearly-marked seasons, most English poetry is about as concrete and sensuous as the abominable snowman, whether it is

Spring the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
or

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
. . . . While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

How can our students ever tell Wordsworth's skylark from Shelley's well enough to be able to write an essay on them when both are equally based on a figment of the imagination?

I remember the first time I had to teach a skylark-poem and the trouble I took to make the bird as real and down-to-earth to my students as it is in its own native land. I ransacked the library for encyclopaedias, waded through books of natural history for likenesses of the bird and for accounts of its habits and habitat and to get some idea of the 'flood of harmony' it is supposed to 'pour upon the world'. And when, finally, I stood before my audience equipped with all those audio-visual aids I had hunted up, my feeling was not that I had brought the skylark nearer home to them and to their world of reality, but rather that I had been on a wild-goose chase.

Is poetry to be taught as zoology and botany? And if you start with the flora and the fauna, what about the rest of the world of English poetry: the social and political background, the religious and the classical heritage of Europe, most of which is *terra incognita* for the average Indian student? How then can his imagination be affected, his emotions stirred, by an English poet who, having been moved sincerely and deeply by the world around him, has made a highly technical word-pattern of his experience in images, intonations and rhythms?

Not only do our innocent young men, in the answers they provide us with in an examination, demonstrate the futility of trying to make them appreciate pieces like Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and Mr T. S. Eliot's *Hollow Men*, but the papers usually set for them by experienced examiners seem to give the lie to the whole idea behind the teaching of poetry:

1. What is the philosophy of Matthew Arnold as revealed in *The Scholar Gipsy*?
2. What thoughts on life and death does the nightingale bring to the mind of Keats?
3. How does the 'Debate at Pandemonium' bring out the character of the individual devils?

Or there is the more sophisticated question demanding discussion of

some critical observation. In any case the student reproduces from memory what he calls the 'summary', and if all is well with his grammar and diction, our candidate gets a Second Class. It is rarely that he is absolutely floored by an unexpected question. Once it happened to be a question of critical preference between two poems, and our innocent young man prefaced the summary of the poem of his 'choice' with this artless remark: 'When we consider the summaries of both the poems, we get a sweet and melodious summary only in Dryden's *Song for St Cecilia's Day*. The summary of this poem is very sweet to read,' et cetera, and then he went on 'From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony' to 'the last dreadful Hour' of the crumbling of the pageant!

If poetry-study were merely the squeezing out of the substance, story or ideas of a narrative poem, or the study of character in a dramatic piece, or indulgence in mere empty verbiage about the more elusive sort of lyric, then why study poetry at all? We might, with greater delight, read drama, or prose-literature of greater usefulness.

But it is not the whole of English poetry that is under fire. There are in English as in every literature, subjects and themes of world-wide interest treated in plain language of direct communication: themes of filial love and piety, heroism and valour, love, jealousy and revenge, worked out more through the hearts of men and women, of more universal appeal than 'some corner of a foreign field that is for ever England'. We have the best example of this in the pages of the myriad-minded Shakespeare, who is a study to himself. For the rest, we have our own native poetry dealing with the very world in which we live and move and have our being, in a diction and rhythm to which our ears have been attuned from the nursery up. Such a poetry is best qualified to take over the fostering of our emotions and the development of our imagination.

The English language, as a medium of instruction in the higher sciences and as a means of communication with the wider world outside, has for contemporary India chiefly a utilitarian value. To write it correctly and idiomatically is what the Indian universities require of every student. Will not this aim be better achieved if we give our youngsters a thorough drilling in English grammar to start with, then some practice in original prose-composition, and plenty of living English prose-literature to nourish themselves on in the meantime? And we shall probably see them thriving the better for being put on a thinner diet of this 'honey-dew' and 'milk of Paradise' prepared on an alien shore.

(A version of this article appeared in The Hindu of 5th July 1959)

A Note on the Singular and Plural

MIROSLAV BEKER

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In a number of languages the dilemma 'singular or plural with collective nouns' does not exist; nouns like *government*, *crowd*, *party*, etc., will usually be followed by the singular. In English, however, this is a stumbling-block for the foreign student and the whole issue is even more tricky since grammarians do not seem to agree concerning concord with collective nouns. The author of the popular series *Essential English*, C. E. Eckersley, writes in his *Concise Grammar for Foreign Students*:

Collective nouns take a singular verb if looked upon as denoting one whole, but a plural if looked upon as denoting individuals, e.g. if we say 'The Government was unanimous', we are plainly thinking of the Government as one body and therefore the singular is used. But if we say 'The Government are all wandering like lost sheep' we are regarding the Government as composed of many separate individuals and the verb is therefore plural.

Cyril Miller in his *Grammar of Modern English for Foreign Students* and Eric Partridge in *Usage and Abusage* take a similar line. Surprisingly, Brian Kelly in his *Advanced English Course for Foreign Students* says that

collective nouns which refer to persons generally, in modern usage, take a plural verb, though singular is still sometimes used. E.g. The public have not received the book well. The Government have issued a new decree.

Fowler in *Modern English Usage* says that such words as army, fleet, part, pack, crowd, mess, number, majority . . . are treated as singular or plural at discretion—and sometimes without discretion. 'The Cabinet is divided' is better because in the order of thought a whole must precede division, and 'The Cabinet are agreed' is better because it takes two or more to agree.

(Compare Fowler's examples with those given by Eckersley!) But, as Fowler goes on, that

is a delicate distinction, and few will be at pains to make it. . . . In general it may be said that while there is always a better and

a worse in the matter, there is seldom a right and wrong, and any attempt to elaborate rules would be wasted labour. H. Sweet in his *New English Grammar* and Otto Jespersen in *Essentials of English Grammar* make no difference between cases when a collective noun means one whole and when its members are meant individually. G. H. Vallins, although mentioning in *Good English* the above distinction, finally agrees

that there is no rule. Usage changes, sometimes the singular is in fashion and sometimes the plural. It is consistent respect for the decision that matters.

Whose view is the foreigner supposed to follow? Brian Kelly's statement that 'collective nouns which refer to persons generally, in modern usage, take a plural verb' could easily be called into question by the 'government' singular-type of sentence one can find in the papers any day. The suggestion made by Eckersley and by others who take the same view seems to me far too rigid, for with collective nouns the number is used much more indiscriminately in current English.

A few quotations will illustrate my point:

The Austin Company *has* produced a series of light planes . . .
(*The Times*, June 1, 1959,¹ p. 17).

A little later in the same article we read that
at the other extreme de Havilland *have* built many twin-engined
Doves.

On the same page, in another news item, we find that
Ind Coope certainly *have* no doubts on the subject . . .

while in *The Times* of June 4 (p. 19) we read that

there are good longer term prospects for Ind Coope now that
it has a large stake in the London market . . .

In the issue of *The Times* already quoted (June 1) we read (p. 18)
that in

Australia the British Metal Corporation (Australia) Pty. Limited
are the proprietors of a company called Moorside Investments
Pty. Ltd. . . .

and later that

Henry Gardner and Co. Ltd. *has* continued to trade satisfactorily.

One could with reason argue against the use of the plural in the sentence about the 'British Metal Corporation', as the whole corporation is taken as one unit, while in the second sentence (about Gardner and Co.) the plural could be justified, since the subject consists of two elements.

In the following sentences the singular and plural are more or less

¹The rest of the newspapers quoted in this article are all 1959 issues.

interchangeable without perceptible alteration in the meaning. In some of these examples (3 and 4) the inconsistency in usage is obvious.

Collective nouns with the singular:

- (1) The Tube Investments Group *is* big in every sense . . . (*The Guardian*, November 19, p. 12).
- (2) Now BOAC *offers* you . . . (*ibid.*, p. 12).
- (3) The Board of Trade also *states* that *it has* decided . . . (*ibid.*, p. 12).
- (4) AEU *boycotts* another unofficial conference . . . (*Yorkshire Post*, November 4, p. 1).

Collective nouns with the plural:

- (1) The Gallup Poll *have* ordered a National Elliott . . . (*Yorkshire Post*, November 4, p. 3).
- (2) John Laing and Son Ltd. *announce* the completion of the Luton to Dunchurch section of Britain's first long-distance Motor-Way (*The Guardian*, November 2, p. 11).
- (3) The board of London & Rhodesian Mining & Land *state* that it has been *their* practice . . . (*The Times*, November 4, p. 22).
- (4) Mandleberg of Salford now *add* oils and water repellent finish to *their* famous range of finishes for the rainwear and sports-wear trades (*The Guardian*, November 19, p. 13).

So far as I could see, when 'team' or 'club' are implicitly understood the plural is used almost without exception:

England *Win* Test Match (*The Star*, June 8, p. 1).

Hampshire *Surrender* the Initiative (*The Times*, June 3, p. 4).

Windsor Park *Retain* Argentine Cup (*The Times*, June 1, p. 16).

Australia *Take* Initiative (*The Times*, November 14, p. 3).

But in *The Times* (June 10, p. 3) we find the headline 'British Team *is* Taking Shape' where, if we agreed (to paraphrase Fowler) that in the order of thought division must in this example precede unity, we might argue for the plural.

'Staff' also seems to attract the plural

Their present staff *number* 280 . . . (*The Times*, June 16, p. 7).

The staff of the Government Chemists Department *are* alarmed at the prospect . . . (*The Times*, June 4, p. 3).

The counter staff *have* been given instructions (from a post office notice).

Perhaps the best approach to this problem, in teaching English to a foreigner, is to tell the student that English collective nouns frequently attract the plural and that in a number of cases the plural with a collective noun suggests plurality or division. Beyond this tentative

point the teacher—if current and not academic prescriptive English is what he wants to teach—should not go.

The second item I want to deal with concerns subjects and complements of different number. In English, unlike many other languages, it is the subject (and not the complement) which determines the number of the verb. Fowler deals with this problem extensively and lucidly in *Modern English Usage*. A number of foreign students—unless told otherwise—will say (to take Fowler's example) 'Our only guide *were* the stars' instead of '... *was* the stars'. To an Englishman the singular in a sentence like 'The purpose of marriage *is* children' sounds perfectly natural, whereas a foreigner might easily be tempted to use the plural. I have heard advanced students of English make sentences like 'The subject of my essay *are* H. G. Wells's political ideas'.

The foreign student might also be puzzled by concord in sentences where an indefinite (*each*, *anyone*, *no-one*, etc.) is the subject. Fowler gives three possible solutions in *Modern English Usage*:

A: ... as anybody can see for himself or herself.

B: ... as anybody can see for themselves.

C: ... as anybody can see for himself.

After dismissing solution A, Fowler says that B

is the popular solution; it sets the literary man's teeth on edge and he exerts himself to give the same meaning in some entirely different way, if he is not prepared, as he usually is, to risk C.

... C is here recommended.

And concluding the passage Fowler ironically puts the question:

Have the patrons of B made up their minds yet between *Everyone was blowing their noses* and *Everyone were blowing their noses*? Fowler is perhaps too rigorous in this case; even in a writer who cared as much about language as did Virginia Woolf we can find sentences like:

It appeared that *nobody* ever said a thing *they* wanted ... (*The Voyage Out*, The Hogarth Press, Ch. II, p. 35).

Willoughby disappeared over the vessel's side ... shouting over his shoulder that *every one* *was* to mind and to behave *themselves* (*ibid.* Ch. II, p. 37).

It doesn't hurt *any one* to earn *their* money ... (*Night and Day*, The Hogarth Press, Ch. II, p. 27).

For some reason *no one* likes to be told that *they* do not read enough poetry ... (*ibid.* Ch. X. p. 135).

G. H. Vallins is more prepared to compromise. Commenting on the same types of sentence he says in *Good English*:

Unless we are prepared to condone this disagreement as being so common that it has become part of modern usage, we shall condemn them as examples of careless writing.

Most probably the foreign student will spontaneously use the 'correct' solution, i.e. the indefinite plus the singular, as this concord is observed in a great number of other languages. But an advanced learner ought to be made aware of the other alternative, to spare him belated discoveries. If even advanced students are uncertain about some of the items I have listed in this article, it is largely due to the fact that a number of books meant for the foreign learner have either oversimplified or overlooked these problems.

Graded and Restricted Vocabularies and their Use in the Oral Teaching of English as a Second Language—II

BERNARD LOTT

This detailed study of certain restricted vocabularies has been necessary because constructive proposals for their use can be made only if their scope and limitations are fully understood. Yet there is in print little or no guidance as to the kind of teaching in which they can give the best service.

Two American critics have suggested¹ that restricted vocabularies are not workable unless they result from the rigorous selection of dictionary senses, and have called for lists which are most carefully limited in the semantic ranges of their items. It is interesting to notice that this is diametrically opposed to the principles of Basic, which admits items for precisely the opposite reason, that each item is maximally wide in semantic range. The very precise selection of a limited number of dictionary senses has, of course, a good deal to recommend it, since the use of the vocabulary would then result in a more perfect control than could otherwise be attained, but that is more the concern of the textbook writer than of the working teacher in the classroom. The writer will set himself limited objectives at various stages in the presentation of his material, and will have to decide what words in what senses to admit, and what to reject. Even he, however, will probably have to reduce the subtleties of the *Oxford*

¹C. C. Fries and A. A. Traver, *English Word Lists*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, p. 89.

English Dictionary to a more rough-and-ready listing of senses, but at the earliest stages of language study approximation is preferable to over-precision, for it effectively reduces the learning burden. Outside and beyond the textbook course, semantic considerations need to be relaxed even further, since no normal person will be able to handle (say) 15 of the 44 possible senses of *with*,¹ and consciously reject the other 29, especially when all the other words will be semantically circumscribed as well. It would, indeed, not be in the interests of the class to do so, since linguistic skill is increased by watching words at work and by using them in context, not by fitting them into a static and predetermined scheme. Approximation and adjustment lead to discoveries in the connotations of words; this process at least is 'natural', and is an essential element in the progress of language study.

The teacher's knowledge of, and skill in using, restricted vocabularies is most valuable in the presentation and discussion of material used to support or augment the text-book course, or to go beyond it when the time comes. He will choose material which is roughly suited to the attainments of the class he is preparing for, and by carefully using graded vocabularies in his explanations he will ensure that what is meant to be a simplification really is one, and is not in fact a further complication or something more to be learnt. This is of the greatest importance; the 'translation' of a verb such as *continue* into a Basic collocation 'go on' is not likely to be helpful; instead, it overworks an already well-loaded pair of vocabulary items, and tends rather to confuse than facilitate the student's learning processes. Just what extensions and derivatives are 'permissible' will in the end be impossible to define or adhere to, and will probably depend as much upon the ability and the attainment of the students as upon the directions of the vocabulary compiler. *Go on* is too elliptical as a near-synonym for *continue* and as an extension of *go*. But *go through* (as used in a sentence such as 'I want to go through this work with you') is probably not. *Excepting* can very easily be deduced from *except*, but *unexceptionable* much less so. A trial-and-error approach is at once inevitable and healthy. And if reading matter for study is carefully prepared on these principles, less dissatisfaction will arise (as it often does in adult classes) from the intellectual level of the students being far above what their reading power in English can at the moment bear. Much of this work will be oral, and will include the simplifying of utterances longer than single words or 'normal' collocations; but texts are available which exercise vocabulary control

¹As recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary and Supplement*.

in their glossaries and many more are needed, particularly at levels beyond the most elementary, and treating of subject-matter which is up to date.¹

An important advantage of such teaching is that the acquisition of the language reflects the nature of language itself: it is dynamic, continually adapting itself to new demands and fresh situations. Meanings are fluid—words 'slip, slide, . . . Will not stay still', as T. S. Eliot wrote—and dictionary senses of a word are nothing more than groupings of particular aspects of experience stimulated by that word, inferred from various linguistic and situational contexts; any attempt to restrict this free play of meaning will ultimately fail. The boundary between restricted and normal usage in English must be crossed, and this is the 'weaning' which West discusses in a useful article.² Structure will need care and attention but it is the correct handling of an adequate vocabulary which will make for efficiency in an acquired language, and a limited vocabulary, in leading to it, will (unless the result is quite artificial) exercise its own syntactic control. The pedagogical value of the process can be defined as the exercise of comparing the 'normal' text with the simplified rendering of words or longer passages where they are necessary, and of coming to know by means of this two-way traffic the right word in the right place.

This appeal for the teaching of English by way of true simplification of the living language should not be taken to imply that occasional translation into the students' own language is in any way 'wrong'—a quick mention of a near equivalent in the learners' language remains the most practical way of pin-pointing a word. Nor does it suggest that simplification will provide a synonymous rendering of the material in hand; since it appears that no exact synonyms are available in English, the result will, on the contrary, be an approximation only. The eventual coalescence between the simplified rendering and the full form shows what is probably the only practical way of establishing the denotations and connotations of a word or a phrase.

It remains to give some specific guidance as to what vocabularies might be useful at a number of stages in the learner's progress and as to where they can be seen in action. (West's *New Method Supplementary Readers*³ show how very small vocabularies can be

¹ The *Bridge Series* of readers goes some way towards filling this gap, but the texts are themselves simplified.

² M. West: 'The Problem of "Weaning" in Reading a Foreign Language.' *Modern Language Journal*, XV, April, 1931, pp. 481-9.

³ M. West: *The New Method Readers* (London) began to appear in 1927, and are still in progress as *Supplementary Readers*.

used progressively; they are particularly suited to the needs of younger readers.)

(i) The best thousand-word vocabulary is perhaps *Thousand-Word English*.¹ The compilers set out, in a most helpful and sensible preface, their pragmatic approach to the problem; they considered the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* and Thorndike's first thousand or so words, and put them to use in an attempt to discover an adequate vocabulary of maximum utility for the rendering of material without the use of metaphorical (i.e. opaque) collocations. The semantic ranges of admitted words are not over-rigorously controlled, and it is claimed with some justification that these words and their simpler derivatives will cover 75 to 90 per cent of normal usage in Modern English, e.g. ordinary reading matter. This very satisfactory language plateau has much to commend it, and the books written in it (a number of small volumes in Junior and Senior Series, 1937 to 1939) compare favourably with the Basic texts of the type quoted above.

(ii) *The General Service List*² contains about 2,000 head-words, each of which is followed by a schematic numbered list of 'permitted' senses and sometimes by a series of senses (unnumbered) which are not recommended for use at this level. Here the teacher is certain to find helpful a dictionary of synonyms,³ since this will remind him of near-synonyms which can be tested against the Service List. It will be found that a very great deal of exposition of everyday subject-matter can be comfortably given within the scope of this list; the *Simplified English Series*, edited by C. Kingsley Williams, shows it at work over a wide range of situations. Many of these are admittedly literary in tone, and West, in writing of his list,⁴ concedes that it 'tends to undervalue those items used more in speech than in writing', but the fault, at this level, is not serious. The list, it should be added, derives directly from the *Interim Report*, refined by taking into account the Lorge Semantic Count; it should be distinguished from the *Definition Vocabulary* which West published in 1935, one year before the *Interim Report* appeared. The minimum *Definition Vocabulary* was, after a good deal of experiment, reduced to 1,490 items,

¹ H. E. Palmer and A. S. Hornby: *Thousand-Word English*, London, 1937. This book is now unfortunately out of print, but copies can be seen in libraries.

² M. West: *A General Service List of English Words*, London, revised edition, 1953.

³ e.g. R. Soule: *A Dictionary of English Synonyms*, London, new edition 1937; or *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*, London, 1942.

⁴ *op. cit.* p. viii.

and was used in the *New Method Dictionary*¹ to define about 18,000 words and 6,000 idioms.

(iii) In using *The General Service List*, as the compiler says,² it may be taken as a general rule that anything which seems in the least degree unusual or doubtful should certainly be excluded.

Again, the length of some of the definitions in the *New Method Dictionary* suggests that the utmost skill and patience are necessary in manoeuvring the 1,500 or so items of the *Definition Vocabulary* if true definition is to be given. It seems, then, that a 3,000-word *Vocabulary* might be manipulated with comparative ease as a means of expressing, in an inoffensive style, any thought at any level below the most recondite. Palmer showed this in the many readers he prepared for the use of schools in Japan, where the ability to use a vocabulary of this size effectively is taken as a reasonable aim for every pupil who presents English as a subject for the matriculation examination. But neither Palmer's list nor his readers are readily available outside Japan. Simplification at this level is, however, demonstrated in the *New Swan Shakespeare* series³; in this edition some of the best-known plays of Shakespeare are appearing with explanations of difficult passages and definitions of obsolete words presented entirely within the range of a minimum vocabulary of 3,000 head-words in their more usual senses. For this a special list was prepared, based on the word counts of Thorndike and adjusted by preliminary experimentation, though it is in no sense fabricated to suit literary or historical contexts, but consists of words which are of maximal value in everyday Modern English. Palmer's 3,000-word general list⁴ is no longer available, nor is Bongers',⁵ and it may, after all, be best, and a most stimulating exercise, for each teacher to compose his own, giving due allowance to the linguistic environment and the particular requirements of his students. This could become a stand-by for class-work involving textual explanation in the upper grades, a check to ensure that the simplification is truly simpler than the original and therefore offers the needed assistance.

A teacher can most usefully guide his oral work by reference to one of these vocabulary levels. Of course he will sometimes make

¹ M. West and J. G. Endicott: *The New Method Dictionary*, London, 1935; a new edition is now in preparation.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ London, 1958, in progress.

⁴ i.e. *Second Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection*, Tokyo, 1931.

⁵ H. Bongers: *The History and Principles of Vocabulary Control*, Woerden, Holland, 1947.

'mistakes', but these will not lead to linguistic artificiality; the living language is preserved. For this sort of work, restricted vocabularies larger than 3,000 words long are probably not worth the trouble either to compose or to use.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

I have now had an opportunity to read F. J. Schonell *et al.*: *A Study of the Oral Vocabulary of Adults*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1956. This valuable study is an investigation into the actual speaking vocabulary of a restricted group of semi-skilled and unskilled Australian workers, and is based on a fairly well controlled system of head-words and word-forms, similar to the pragmatic system I have advocated here. In half a million running words of inspired and spontaneous conversation (i.e. recorded both openly and secretly), 6,616 different words were recorded. Of these, 4,539 were 'head-words' as defined by the authors; the rest were words ultimately related to these head-words but too remote from them in form to be linked with them in the word count. It is useful to know that a complete system of communication can depend upon a vocabulary of less than 7,000 head-words, and this tends to confirm what has been put forward above, that an active vocabulary of 3,000 head-words is a substantial part of a complete communication equipment. This study is weak only in its treatment of idiomatic usages; it seems that under this head much work remains to be done.

Grammatical Difficulties of Hungarian Students in Learning English

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Any modern method of English language teaching must be based on a careful analysis of the differences between the grammatical structure of the English language and of the mother tongue of the foreigner who sets himself the task of learning English.

The fundamentally different structure of Hungarian is the main difficulty a Hungarian student has to overcome in learning any Indo-European language. By the time he comes to study English he has made the acquaintance of a series of such problems in his Russian class-work: prepositions, for example, are no longer unfamiliar. Yet besides the difficulties accompanying both his Russian and his English studies, there are problems of a specific character which

arise when he begins to learn English. His joy at the absence of those inflections which had often discouraged him in his Russian class is soon undermined by a series of new difficulties and these prove less easy to overcome by simple mechanical training than the Russian nominal declension. We must agree with V. Grove, who in his book *The Language Bar* states: 'It is commonly believed that the absence of grammar is an advantage to the learner. This would be so if the simplifications of grammar were identical with the simplification of the problem of conveying one's meaning correctly, which, indeed, is not the case.' It is highly embarrassing to cope with a word like *park*, which besides being a noun can represent a series of verbal forms without changing its form and corresponds to the Hungarian Infinitive, Imperative, 1st and 2nd persons singular and 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons plural in the Present Tense of the Indicative and Subjunctive.

The use of both the definite and the indefinite articles differs in several ways from the Hungarian usage and is one of the first 'unpleasant' surprises as there is no article in Russian. The average Hungarian student will, instead of *Honesty is a virtue, Dinner is ready, and I like good books*, say */The/honesty is virtue, /The/dinner is ready, I like/the/good books*.

Another pitfall awaits him when he uses the degrees of adjectives. In the sentences *She is as handsome as her friend* and *She is handsomer than her friend* the same conjunction is used in Hungarian. Even after much training our student will say *She is as handsome than her friend*.

Another peculiarity which he must always keep in mind is the use of the plural after numerals. He is taught to say *Thirty pupils have arrived* and, though he is pleased at such simplicity after the complicated Russian system, he is still inclined to say *Thirty pupil has arrived*. The distinction between *much water* and *many books* also demands a mental effort, there being no difference between the use of countables and uncountables in such cases in Hungarian. During his Russian studies he heard that a possessive pronoun corresponds to the Hungarian possessive suffix. In English this knowledge is not sufficient. He must overcome his habit of putting the definite article before a construction like *my book*, and on the other hand he makes the acquaintance of another possessive pronoun, *mine*, which has its pronominal equivalent in Hungarian.

A new trouble arises from the lack of double negation in English. Our Hungarian student, though he has mastered the rule, will say *I do not see nothing* instead of *I do not see anything* or *I see nothing*.

The use of tenses often becomes one of the trials of his English

class. After Hungarian and Russian this is now the third kind of tense and aspect system he has to appropriate. There being no elaborate system of past tenses either in Hungarian or in Russian, he is puzzled by the variety in English. The Present Perfect, that eternal stumbling block of every foreigner, has its special difficulties for the Hungarian learner. The Present Perfect, when used to express an action or state which began in the past and is still going on in the present, must be translated into Hungarian by the Present Tense. So the Hungarian student will say, even after years of studying English, *How long are you in Budapest?* and *I learn English for two years*, instead of *How long have you been in Budapest?* and *I have been learning English for two years*.

The Passive Voice is practically obsolete in Hungarian. When to use it in English is an enigma which cannot be answered without a sound training.

At the very beginning of his studies the Hungarian student has to face a difficulty in such simple sentences as *What is this? It is a book*. The 3rd person singular of the verb *to be* is omitted here in Hungarian and our student, used to omitting it in all persons in the Russian Present Tense, is amazed to learn that this verb is absolutely necessary in English.

He is also inclined to omit the personal pronoun in all persons, since, as there are verbal endings both in his native tongue and in Russian, the personal pronoun is often omitted in those languages.

The auxiliary verb *to have*, expressing possession, as in the sentence *I have a book*, is also a surprise. An entirely different construction is used in his mother tongue and the Russian usage is rather similar.

Great care must be taken with the auxiliary verbs *can* and *may*. The simple English sentence *May I come in?* is difficult for a Hungarian because no auxiliary verb is used in Hungarian, but a verbal suffix. Again our student will find it difficult to make a distinction between *to know* and *can* in sentences such as *I know the lesson* and *I can swim* because in his native language the same verb is used in both. The student has no less trouble with the verb *must*. An impersonal construction corresponds in Hungarian to the sentence *I must go*.

The Accusative and Infinitive construction is unknown in Hungarian and so are constructions with the Gerund, as in *I objected to his leaving our town*, and with the Participle, as in *Having finished the book I went for a walk*. Here in Hungarian subordinate clauses are used. Students are soon able to cope with these constructions in

class-work but will remain unable to use them correctly on their own.

In a sentence like *Write it on the blackboard* the pronoun *it* is unnecessary in Hungarian, its meaning being implied by a verbal suffix, and so, our student will omit it in English.

Sequence of Tenses is an unfamiliar grammatical phenomenon and the average student is rather puzzled by sentences such as *He told me that he had learnt the lesson*, *He told me that he would learn the lesson*, the Hungarian usage requiring a Past (there is only one Past Tense in Hungarian) and a Future Tense, respectively.

Great stress must be laid upon exercising the correct word order. The fixed English word order is strange to the Hungarian student. He will often place the object at the beginning of the sentence and not be aware of the difference between *Peter loves Mary* and *Mary loves Peter*.

Indirect Speech and Indirect Questions have their special difficulties. In sentences like *I asked him where he went* a conjunction is introduced in Hungarian and we hear our students repeatedly say *I asked him/that/where he went*.

The deep-rooted speech habits of the mother tongue prove to be a serious obstacle to every person trying to learn a second language. Special attention must be devoted to pointing out the differences between the two languages and to discovering types of exercises which will supply the student with an active knowledge of English. By 'active knowledge' we mean the capacity to apply theoretical knowledge to new situations without the teacher's help.

Teachers are assisted in their task by grammars written by Hungarians. It is obvious that a Hungarian student's grammar must differ from a German or Russian student's. Yet teachers largely rely on their own imaginations in the constant search for original types of exercise for students bored with monotony long before they can use their grammar without being reminded of the rule. Good books of exercises are sadly lacking and are but imperfectly replaced by the teacher's creative imagination and skill, for the teacher's own English may be weak.



Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and cordially invite correspondence, though we can give no guarantee of publication. When you write to us, please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. Mr G. de P. Bambridge writes from Cheltenham, England: Some of the assertions of Mr H. A. Cartledge in his 'Verse Speaking in the English Class' (*E.L.T.*, XIII, 2) may be challenged. He says that 'anyone who reads it (English verse) aloud is almost bound to get both syllable stress and sentence stress correct'. Surely there is frequently an opposition between normal speech stress, either of the syllable or of the sentence, and the stress imposed by the rhythm of verse. This leads to stress values in verse which are not the same as those in speech. I am not saying that it cannot nearly always be read with normal stress, but that if this is done, a quality of the verse which depends on heightened, or *abnormal*, stress is lost. Cases in point are a final -*ery* rhyming with a word such as *sea* (I am not advocating -*eree*!), and the rhyme at the end of an 'overflow' line which certainly gains some additional stress from its position *in verse*.

I wonder if teachers introduce songs as an alternative to verse, or whether they are not considered a separate venture. Song very often accentuates the abnormalities of rhythm and stress inherent in verse, while introducing eccentricities of its own. I think song a very valuable way of showing what we are seemingly only too ready to forget—the great affinities between music and some poetry.

[Mr H. A. Cartledge replies: I would not agree with Mr Bambridge that there is any opposition between normal speech stress and that imposed by the metrical patterns of verse (which surely is what he means when he speaks of rhythm). I do agree that there is a counterpoint or shift of stress, particularly in blank verse such as that of Shakespeare. This, however, is raising the discussion to a level above that which my article had in view; and I do not think that it invalidates my remark that the rhythms of English verse normally follow the natural inflections—or, possibly, to be more precise—the natural stresses of the spoken language. This is to be expected in a language which when spoken depends so largely as English does on correct stress for the interpretation of meaning. The existence in English of accentual verse (i.e. verse which depends for its rhythm on stress, not on a regular metrical pattern) which is not to be found in French, for instance, seems to support my view. Obviously practice and training in verse reading are necessary; but if the material is properly chosen and the necessary practice given, verse reading will give the pupils very valuable training in the characteristics of spoken English.

My article made clear, I had hoped, that selection is necessary. I should certainly avoid using verses with rhymes of the kind instance in Mr Bambridge's letter. The Major-General's song in the *Pirates of Penzance* might have furnished him with a better example (strategy—sat-a-gec); but Gilbert was seeking after a comic effect in this instance and would hardly have claimed that the rhyme was a natural one.

I agree entirely with what Mr Bambridge says about the affinities between music and poetry. The wealth of song lyrics in English clearly proves his point. I merely wanted to say that singing English songs is not likely to achieve the same

ends as reading verse aloud. It is indeed a separate activity, and I am grateful for his endorsement of my opinion.]

2. Dr W. R. Lee writes: In his article 'At What Age Should Language-Study Begin?' (E.L.T., XIV, 1), Dr West concedes that an English-as-a-foreign-language course in the primary school may be 'a stimulus to, as well as a time-saver in, later study' (p. 26). He would have it mainly a reading-course, no attempt being made 'to produce active uses of the language', since it is teachers 'unqualified to cope' (p. 25, foot) whom he has in mind. If I understand him rightly, Dr West sees the proper place of more competent teachers as in the secondary school, for beginners of secondary-school age are, he suggests, better than primary-school beginners at foreign-language learning. I find his arguments inconclusive. The point cannot, it appears to me, be *proved* either way: Mr Hill (XIII, 3) does not offer proof.

I agree with Mr Hill that 'the claim that adults under 30 absorb a language far more efficiently and more quickly than infants' is open to doubt. Resident abroad myself I did not find it so—my own very young children, coping with the same bilingual environment I had coped with, picked up the foreign language with much greater accuracy and speed. Recently a Welsh teacher told me that his two eldest sons, who had been 13 and 14 years old when the family moved to Wales ten years ago, still have difficulty in speaking Welsh, whereas two sons of 4 and 8 at the time have learned Welsh perfectly. Nor does it seem that Englishmen's foreign-born wives, 'introduced into an all-English-speaking environment' (pp. 23-4) do so well at English as their children—I have several instances in mind.

In the schools, however, it is not adults but children with whom we are occupied, children of various ages learning a language not as a rule, as Dr West points out, spoken by the community in which they live. Nor can one deny that wherever the education authority decrees that a foreign language must be learned it should arrange for the appropriate training of sufficient teachers and decide on the best age to begin—or, rather, the other way round, as Prof. Gurrey (XIII, 4, p. 170) has suggested. But let us not assume the teachers to be necessarily incompetent, nor think of one country or region alone.

Surely, moreover, a great deal more than Dr West's (a) and (b) and 'two kinds' of fact (p. 22, top) is involved—we are concerned with more than measuring 'general intelligence' and even with more than 'the specific memory and other *abilitiess* involved in language-learning' (my italics): we must, surely, take into account the whole nature of the child. The young child's attitude is different from that of the older child (say, of over 10), who has developed a higher degree of self-awareness, and also of reserve, and is less inclined on the whole to throw himself unselfconsciously into whatever is going on (group games, or miming, or perhaps faithful imitation of the teacher) than is the younger child. The under-tens very readily identify themselves, also, with one character or another in a dramatised incident, and the identification and acting-out can *matter* to them as such things will never *matter* again. They are easy to involve in play-activities which make the classroom a lively and not a 'sterile' (Dr West, p. 23, 2) place—a little world as real to them as the one outside—and they learn all the more effectively for not being aware that learning is in progress.

Does the young child forget more quickly? The bare question should not be put. Forget what, presented in what way, presented when and where and how often? Method comes in here again.

'It would save a great deal of the precious time of the English teacher in the high school,' writes Dr West (p. 25), 'if his pupils came to him already able to read sufficiently to make use of a textbook.' No doubt: and it would save still more of his time (whether this is more precious than the primary school teacher's or not) if they came up able to *speak* some English; though no less important than time-saving itself seems to be the laying of a good foundation of speech-usage and of attachment to the language—an attachment which subsequent work, if 'work' it must be, should do nothing to destroy.

But for young children to learn English as a foreign language is no new thing in several countries, and it seems that where suitable methods are employed the results are excellent. It would be especially interesting to hear from teachers who have been using play and activity methods with young children in this field and have also taught older beginners.

3. Mr D. L. K. Milman writes from Peshawar: I was interested in the answer to the Question about the use of 'whose' as a relative pronoun in *E.L.T.*, XIII, 3.

I would venture to suggest that, even more than the reason given, it is a question of euphony and rhythm of the sentence.

As Stannard Allen rightly points out in his book 'Living English Structure', 'of which' is a very clumsy expression, and in Southey's sentence referred to in the question, the substitution of 'of which' followed by the definite article for 'whose' would make the sentence far less melodious. I feel that the writers of the sentences quoted in the answer have simply used 'whose' instead of 'of which' because it sounds better, and have deliberately or unconsciously ignored normal grammatical practice.

[Dr Wood replies: I am sure Mr Milman is right. Euphony and rhythm are undoubtedly often prime considerations, but even so, I do not think *whose* can always be substituted. Could we say, for instance, *cars whose cost is beyond the means of the ordinary person*, or *houses whose rents have not been increased since before the war*? And though we might say *schemes whose merits have yet to be proved*, it is doubtful whether we should feel comfortable about *schemes whose outcome is still in doubt*, or *a conference on whose success the peace of the world may depend*. Different people may perhaps feel differently about such sentences, for as I said in my original answer, it is a matter of subjective factors rather than of grammatical rule, and sometimes not merely the single unit but the total context is involved; but generally, I think, *whose* will be felt to be appropriate only when there is some sense of possession (*a clock 'possesses' a bell, houses 'possess' gardens, a scheme 'possesses' merits*) or where the two things are closely identified in the mind of the writer or speaker, as *cars and their owners, flowers and their scent, poems and their authors*.]

4. Mr D. R. Powell, Casilla 276, Tucumán, Argentina, asks any reader who can supply him with *E.L.T.*, Vol. I, Nos. 1 and 2, to be kind enough to write to him direct.

Question Box

Conducted by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

We shall do our best to deal with the ever-increasing number of questions which our readers send in, but we cannot promise to answer them all.

QUESTION. When a student wrote in an examination paper, 'The tubes—depending from their size and purpose—are processed etc.' *from* was crossed out, of course, and corrected to *upon*. Yet I have a feeling that it is not altogether wrong, and that there are exceptional cases where *depend* may be used with *from*.

ANSWER. *Depend* is followed by *from* only when the verb is used in the literal sense of 'hanging down': e.g. 'an electric light depending from the ceiling.'

QUESTION. In her short story *The Old Demon*, Pearl Buck has a passage which runs as follows: 'She hoisted herself carefully from the earth. At her age she need be afraid of nothing. She could, she decided, go and see what it was.' All the reference books at my disposal state that there is no preterite use of the auxiliary *need* in its unchanged form. Could one suggest that the sentence constructed with *need* is an inner monologue, and that hence *need* is in the present tense? But if that is so, why should the sentence which follows, and which most definitely is inner monologue, revert to the past tense?

ANSWER. There is nothing strange or unusual involved here. What you have called 'inner monologue' has the same changes of tense and person as does indirect (or reported) speech, but retains the direct form of questions and statements. With most verbs, when direct is transposed to indirect speech a present tense becomes a past (*I can go and see what it is* becomes *She said she could go and see what it was*), but *need* (like *ought* and *must*, which also have no separate past forms) remains unchanged (*I need be afraid of nothing* becomes *She said she need be afraid of nothing*). This accounts for *need* in one sentence being followed by *could* in the next. I do not think, however, that it would be correct to call *need* a present tense here; it is a past, just as much as *could* is. The fact is that as a past tense *need*, in its unchanged form (again like *must* and *ought*), is found normally only in subordinate clauses, not in main clauses. The sentences you quote, being inner monologue, have the form of main clauses, but take the verb forms which would be found in the subordinate clauses of reported speech.

QUESTION. Which is correct, 'the Court of St James' or 'the Court of St James's'? If it is the latter (as is stated by the C.O.D.), how is the genitive form to be accounted for?

ANSWER. 'The Court of St James' is often heard, and even seen in print, but foreign ambassadors are accredited to 'the Court of St James's', which is really the correct form. The reference is to St James's Palace, the old official residence of the kings and queens of England. It is the same as 'the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's' (St Paul's Cathedral), not 'of St Paul'.

QUESTION. In an article on fire-prevention I have come across the sentence, 'One of the outstanding points was the provision of *fire-breaks* constructed of an incombustible material, such as Asbestolux.' Are these fire-breaks walls which break a fire, or openings in a wall, or what? I cannot find an explanation in any dictionary.

ANSWER. It is unlikely that you will find the word in any ordinary dictionary. It is obviously a technical term in the vocabulary of fire-prevention, probably made up on the analogy of *wind-break* (a hedge, fence, wall, etc., to break the force of the wind). The precise form that a fire-break would take would, no doubt, vary according to circumstances (e.g., whether it was inside a building, between blocks of buildings, in an open-air yard, etc.), but it is obviously not a gap or an opening, since it is constructed of material. It is presumably a wall, part of a wall, a partition, etc., made of incombustible material, to check the spread of fire.

QUESTION. What exactly is the meaning of 'to build up' and 'a build-up' in the following examples? 'Air builds up on the wings of an aircraft', 'The build-up of the Bundeswehr', 'the NATO military build-up', 'the gradual build-up of a European security system.'

Build-up also seems to have the meaning of the work a booster does, and of allegations which cannot be proved.

ANSWER. *To build up*, used intransitively, means gradually to pile up, or increase in intensity. We can speak of snow building up against a wall, or of pressure building up. With the noun *build-up* you have examples of two slightly different meanings in the sentences you quote. (i) The way a thing or an organization is constructed or built. This is the meaning in your first two examples. Similarly we might speak of the political build-up in a country, i.e. the structure of its political system and political parties. (ii) The process of building up. Your third sentence illustrates this meaning.

The work done by a booster is, of course, to 'boost' or build up pressure, so this is merely another application of the former of the two meanings given above. It is not quite correct to say that 'a build-up' is used of allegations which cannot be proved (after all, allegations which cannot be proved may nevertheless be true). Rather it should be 'allegations in which there is no truth, but which have been deliberately made, with a full knowledge of their falsity, in order to serve an ulterior purpose (e.g. concocted charges of espionage, etc.)'. Even so, the more usual word is 'a frame-up'.

QUESTION. The C.O.D. explains the term *city* thus: . . . '(strictly) town created city by charter, esp. as containing cathedral (but not all cathedral towns are cities, nor vice versa)'. Could you give me the names of some cathedral towns that are not cities, and of some cities that do not contain a cathedral?

ANSWER. It is a common (but erroneous) belief, even amongst English people, that a city must have a cathedral. The right of a town to call itself a city is granted by the sovereign; a church is elevated to the status of a cathedral by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Quite frequently when a town becomes a city, the Archbishop follows the sovereign's lead and raises the oldest, or the principal, parish church to the status of a cathedral; but not always. Ely and Derby both have cathedrals, but neither is a city. Leeds has been a city for a good many years, but it has no cathedral. Cambridge was created a city by King George VI in 1951, but that too has no cathedral. Incidentally, on the occasion of this

event, *The Times* of 24 May 1951, carried quite a long article discussing the question of cities and cathedral towns from an historical point of view. If a file of *The Times* for that year is available to you you might find this article very informative.

The above reply refers, of course to Britain. In America any town with a population of eight thousand or more is called a city.

QUESTION. Should one say 'It is I' or 'It is me', 'That is for the Major and I' or 'for the Major and me'?

ANSWER. All prepositions in English take the accusative case; accordingly it should be 'for the Major and me'. To say 'for the Major and I' would be incorrect. As for your other question, strict grammatical 'rule' would prescribe 'It is I', but almost everyone says 'It is me', and since grammar is founded on usage and not vice versa, this may be considered correct. *I*, however, is used when it is followed by a clause introduced by a subject pronoun, but *me* when the introductory word of the clause is an object pronoun: 'It is I who am to blame', 'It is me that they want to see.'

QUESTION. May the abbreviation *e.g.* be used after as well as before the explanation to which it refers?

ANSWER. It is always placed before the explanation, never after it.

QUESTION. What should I call (a) a book in which pupils write down their assignments of work for future days (an assignment book, a diary)? (b) a piece of paper with notes or information on it, used by a pupil to cheat in a test or examination?

ANSWER. (a) 'Diary' would probably be the best word, or perhaps 'Homework diary', if that is the purpose for which it is used. (b) It is usually referred to as a 'crib', though the word is rather colloquial. There does not seem to be a more literary term.

QUESTION. What is the meaning of the last four words in the following sentence: 'I'm very fond of her, but a little of her company goes a long way'?

ANSWER. It is a colloquialism, meaning that when I have had a little of her company I do not want any more for a considerable time. The suggestion is that the lady in question is boisterous, garrulous, etc., and that though the speaker can tolerate this for a while, too much of it would become unbearable.

QUESTION. Could you please answer the following questions for me? (i) May 'apparatus' be used for 'camera'? (ii) Is the word 'hairdresser' used for one who cuts and attends to men's hair, or should one say 'barber'? (iii) Is the word 'student' used for secondary school pupils?

ANSWER. (i) If the question means, 'Are the two words interchangeable?' the answer is No. We may speak of 'photographic apparatus', but that would include not only the camera, but the other things used in photography also. 'A piece of photographic apparatus' might refer to the camera, but equally well it might refer to any of the other things.

(ii) Such a person would describe himself as a hairdresser (the trade association is called The National Hairdressers' Federation) and his customers might also

use the word, but in ordinary conversation many men would say that they were going to the barber's to get their hair cut.

(iii) The word 'student' is used only of those who are at a university or a college, or who attend adult classes. It is not used of pupils in a school.

QUESTION. Are the following correct? 'When we have not understood *something*', 'When you have not done *something* very well.'

ANSWER. Yes, both are correct. The suggestion behind the question presumably is that it might have been better to use 'anything'; but there is a difference between the two words. *Something* thinks of some definite, though unspecified, thing; *anything* is much broader and more general, and consequently vaguer. 'Do you want anything?' is prepared for an answer either way. 'Do you want something?' suggests that the speaker thinks the person so addressed does want something, and therefore anticipates an affirmative answer. Besides this, there is the fact that 'not . . . anything' would normally be taken to mean 'nothing'.

QUESTION. Is *ones* used with *these* and *those*?

ANSWER. No; although we say *this one* and *that one* we never say *these ones* and *those ones*; it is always merely *these* and *those*.

QUESTION. Why can we say 'He took his seat in the fourpennies' (at a cinema), when we must say 'Fourpence took a lot of saving'?

ANSWER. *Fourpence* is a noun denoting a single sum of money, and the adjective from it is *fourpenny*; a seat that costs fourpence is a fourpenny seat, just as a stamp that costs fourpence is a fourpenny stamp. (Cf. also a threepenny piece—a coin worth threepence.) In the sentence you give, 'the fourpennies' is an adjective converted to a noun; it is short for 'the fourpenny seats'.

QUESTION. We may say either 'My shoes want (need) mending' or 'My shoes need to be mended'. Is it possible also to say 'My shoes want (need) being mended' using the gerund of the passive voice?

ANSWER. No. After *need* and *want* the only -ing form that can be used is the normal gerundial form (*mending*).

QUESTION. What is the derivation of 'Liver' in the place-name Liverpool? I know there is a Liver bird on a building near the Mersey.

ANSWER. Liverpool was originally the name of a tidal pool (since submerged by the sea) on the banks of which the town grew up. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names*, edited by Eilert Ekwall, gives two possible explanations: (i) that the name means 'muddy pool', (ii) that the *Liver* was the name of a stream that at one time flowed into the pool. 'Liver bird' ['laɪvə-bə:d] is a back-formation from the name of the town. (See the *Oxford Dictionary*.)

QUESTION. What is a chained Bible?

ANSWER. A Bible chained down to the lectern or reading desk, to prevent its being stolen, or removed without authority.

QUESTION. What is the plural of 'Poet Laureate'? By whom is the Poet Laureate appointed? Who was the first one, and where can I find a complete list?

ANSWER. The plural is 'Poets Laureate'. *Laureate* is an adjective, and is therefore uninflected. The Poet Laureate is an officer of the royal household and as such

he receives a stipend; the appointment is therefore (nominally at least) in the hands of the sovereign. The first to hold the office was Ben Jonson, though the first on whom the actual title was conferred was John Dryden. You will find a full list in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, edited by Sir Paul Harvey, under the heading 'Poet Laureate'. It may be added that by no means all the holders of the office have been poets of any distinction.

QUESTION. Would you please comment on the use of the preposition *in*, and the indefinite article, in the following sentence from Mrs Gaskell's novel *Cranford*? 'Oh, the busy work Miss Matty and I had in chasing the sunbeams, as they fell, *in an afternoon* right down on this carpet through the blindless window.'

Isn't the usual phrase *one afternoon*, or if a preposition is used should it not be either *on an afternoon*, or *of an afternoon*, as in the sentence 'What do you do of a Sunday?', signifying not one particular Sunday, but Sundays generally?

ANSWER. The meaning that Mrs Gaskell intends to express is a general one, so that *one afternoon* would not be correct in this particular sentence. In standard usage this is expressed, as you say, by *of an afternoon*, but in the north of England this seems to be quite unknown, and even today almost everyone says *in an afternoon* to convey this meaning. It is, that is to say, a regional idiom, and anyone coming from the south soon becomes conscious of it. He may even find that his own 'What do you do of an evening?' is 'corrected' to 'What do you do in an evening?', if the person he is speaking to knows him well enough to comment on such things. Mrs Gaskell was, of course, a Northerner; she lived as a girl at Knutsford, in Cheshire (the original of Cranford), and the whole of her married life, up to the time of her death, was passed in Manchester, where her husband was a well-known Unitarian minister.

QUESTION. I want to illustrate the difference between *to cut one's finger* and *to have one's finger cut off*. Are the following two sentences correct? 'Don't let the child play with that knife; he might cut his finger', 'Don't let the child go near the electric saw; he might get his finger cut off.'

ANSWER. Yes, both sentences are correct, though it is perhaps worth noticing that both *have* and *get* followed by the past participle are capable of expressing two meanings, one active, denoting something done or initiated by the subject, and the other approximating to a passive in that it denotes something suffered by the subject. 'He had his window smashed by the mob' (suffered), 'He had his window repaired' (caused to be); 'He got his coat torn in the scuffle' (suffered), 'He got his coat mended' (caused to be).

QUESTION. Are the forms 'the whole England', 'the whole of England' and 'all England' equally correct, and if so is there any difference in meaning between them?

ANSWER. The first is incorrect and would never be said. The other two are both correct. 'The whole of England' would be used when we think of the country geographically and in its entirety, as a single piece of territory, as distinct from its constituent parts or counties: e.g. The whole of England was covered with snow for a week. 'All England' is used when the reference is to her people rather than to the land enclosed within her shores: e.g. 'All England mourned the death of Nelson', 'The Archbishop of Canterbury is Primate of All England'.

QUESTION. What is the difference of usage or meaning between *next* and *nearest*? Several English grammar books say that *next* is an old superlative of *near*. Is it ever used in that sense now?

ANSWER. By origin *next* is the superlative of *nigh* (=near), but *nigh* itself is now archaic except in a few traditional phrases and combinations like *wellnigh*, and although the person who sits next to you at a concert or a meeting is probably also the person who sits nearest, the two words are no longer thought of as having any essential connection. *Nearest* denotes proximity in distance, *next* is concerned with order or sequence. The next town is the one towards which we are travelling; it may or may not be the nearest town. The nearest town may be the one we have just left. The house nearest to mine may be the one on the opposite side of the road; the house next to mine is the one immediately following it, on the same side, though there may be several hundred yards between them.

QUESTION. According to the textbooks adverbs of frequency are placed *in front* of the principal verb of the sentence. How, then, are we to account for the position of *often* in the following sentence from Agatha Christie's *Five Little Pigs*? 'Caroline Spalding came *often* to stay at Aldebury.'

ANSWER. The rule you quote is a sound one, and you are unlikely to be wrong in following it, except in the case of the verb *to be*, when the adverb of frequency normally follows the verb (*He is always punctual. She is often late*). But textbook rules deal with what is the general practice; for particular reasons or for particular purposes they may occasionally be ignored. For example, despite what has been said in the preceding sentence about the verb *to be*, we can say *He always was a strange fellow*, with a heavy stress on *was*. Similarly, *often*, *frequently*, *rarely*, *sometimes* may on occasions follow the verb, to give emphasis to them: *Do you go often to the cinema? No, but I go sometimes.* This is probably the explanation of the sentence you quote from Agatha Christie.

Incidentally it may be noticed that in certain contexts a change in the position of *often* may change the meaning of the sentence. *I often wake up during the night* means that it happens on many different nights. *I wake up often during the night* means I wake up many times during one night.

QUESTION. Some verbs allow the following pattern, without *to*, provided that the indirect object is shorter than the direct one: Verb + Ind. Obj. + Direct Obj. It sometimes happens, however, that the direct object is a relative pronoun introducing a subordinate clause, and since this is only one word the indirect object obviously cannot be shorter. In that case, may the preposition be omitted or not? I do not find any reference to such cases in grammar books. The following are examples of the kind of sentence I had in mind. 'This is the letter which I sent (to) you', 'This is the present which I offered (to) him', 'This is the report which I wrote (to) them', 'This is the amount which I remitted (to) you.'

ANSWER. The first two sentences you give would certainly be constructed without *to*: the third might, in rather exceptional circumstances, but we do not usually speak of writing a report *to* someone, so that it is unlikely that we should ever use the sentence either with or without *to*. And this applies just as much to main clauses as to subordinate. We write a report *on* a subject, *for* a person, and we *send* the report *to* him (or *send him the report*). The fourth sentence, I think, would never be constructed without *to*, either in a subordinate or a main clause

(at least, not in British English). We remit money *to* a person, not remit a person money.

The chief objection to the omission of *to* (in such sentences as *They sent every householder in the district a notice*) is, I think, that where the first object is longer than the second the sentence is apt to seem 'top-heavy'. In main clauses the indirect object comes before the direct, but in relative clauses this order is reversed. Even in main clauses or simple sentences, however, it is by no means invariably the case that the indirect object must be shorter than the direct one if *to* is to be omitted. It is quite normal English to say *She sent every one of her friends a Christmas card*, or *He gave every child in the room a shilling*.

When the two patterns V+Ind. O.+O. and V+O.+To... are possible, which we use depends on two considerations, both of them subjective rather than matters of grammatical rule. First, what we may call 'centre of interest'. *He left a thousand pounds to his housekeeper, five hundred to his secretary, etc.*, is concerned with the amount and destination of his legacies. *He left his housekeeper a thousand pounds, his secretary five hundred, etc.*, is concerned with the way his housekeeper and his secretary fared under his will. But cutting across this centre of interest there may sometimes be the consideration of rhythm, euphony or balance which puts one or the other construction out of the question.

QUESTION. I have come across an advertisement in an English newspaper depicting a boy drinking from a bottle, and underneath are the words, 'Ever met someone who's tasted glass?' The point of the advertisement is that containers made of other materials may give a 'taste' to the drink in them, but that there is no taste from glass. I have always been given to understand that in negative and interrogative sentences *anyone*, not *someone*, must be used, with the possible exception of questions that expect an affirmative answer. I should like your observations.

ANSWER. The point you make is, in general, correct; idiomatic English demands *anyone* in such a sentence. To restrict *someone*, however, to 'questions that expect an affirmative answer' (if by that is meant an affirmative answer from the person to whom the question is put) is to confine it too narrowly. It really depends on the idea of affirmation being present in the mind of the speaker. It is true that this is most frequently the case when an affirmative answer is expected, as in the question *Has someone been smoking in this room?* (Implication: I am sure someone has, for I can smell tobacco smoke.) It may be, however, that an affirmative answer is hoped for, though not definitely expected (e.g. *Can someone lend me a French dictionary?*), or that the speaker is indifferent as to the answer, but can himself affirm the fact. At breakfast, for instance, a wife may enquire of her husband, 'Did you hear someone go past singing during the night?' She does not necessarily either expect or hope for an affirmative reply, but she knows that someone did go past singing, because she was awake and heard it. And finally *someone* may occasionally be used even when a negative reply is expected, if the questioner is in a position to counter it with an affirmative. Thus 'Have you ever met someone who has tasted glass?' (expecting the answer 'Of course not') could be used if the intention is to follow it up with, 'Well, there is such a person, and I'm going to introduce you to him'. Indeed, the present writer's first response to the quotation from the advertisement which you give in your question was that it was going to lead up to a demonstration that, contrary to general opinion, glass could be tasted.

As for negative sentences, it is true that *anyone* is usually used in these, but *someone* is not impossible if the speaker has a particular person in mind. *Anyone*

is general, *someone* is specific. Therefore, if we are discussing the question of an appointment, for example, and are merely speaking in general terms, we should say *They are not likely to appoint anyone without a university degree*. But if we are referring to a particular candidate (say Mr Smith) whom we know to have no university degree, and are concerned only with his chances, then we should say *They are not likely to appoint someone without a university degree*.

QUESTION. What are the different ways of pronouncing O and when are they used?

ANSWER. The words themselves (zero, cipher, nought, o) are pronounced 'zɪərəʊ, 'saɪfə, 'nɔ:t, 'ou.

The letter O o is always 'ou.

In arithmetic, the figure 0 itself is 'a nought' a 'no:t', but = 0 could be pronounced 'equals nought' 'ɪ:kwalz 'nɔ:t or 'equals zero' 'ɪ:kwəlz 'zɪərəʊ. 0·1 is only 'nought point one' 'nɔ:t point 'wʌn, but '01 is more usually said as point 'ou 'wʌn, the pronunciation point 'no:t 'wʌn being felt to be 'harder to say'. Similarly, '0001 would be put into words by a mathematician as point 'θri: ouz 'wʌn, since point 'no:t 'no:t 'no:t 'wʌn would take so long to say. Telephone numbers are generally said with O 'ou (see answer to preceding question). 'Zero' is also the word used when referring to temperature ('ten degrees below zero'), and in the modern expression 'zero-hour'. Notice that the word is written out in full in such cases. 'O' Centigrade' would generally be put into words as 'no:t dɪgri:z 'sentigreid, because 'zɪərəʊ [dɪgri:z] 'sentigreid might be interpreted as absolute zero, which is -273°C.

'Cipher' is not used for 'nought' nowadays. 'In cipher' means the same as 'in code', and 'he's just a cipher' would be interpreted to mean 'he's a nonentity, he doesn't count'.

QUESTION. In Sir Osbert Sitwell's *Left Hand, Right Hand* (St Martin's Library, 1957) I have found the following sentences: 'It may well be that some qualities vital for achievement in the arts were transmitted through my mother, though *herself* set so little value on this side of life' (p. 6): 'As for Henry, in after years, *himself* recognized the part he had played in the development of Sacheverell and *myself*' (p. 105): 'One afternoon he fetched me for a drive. *Himself* was driving the vehicle'. (p. 262). In this work there are several other sentences in which a pronoun ending in *self* is used as a subject. I have always been taught—and have myself taught—that *myself*, *herself*, etc., should not be used as a subject except when in apposition to a simple personal pronoun or a noun. Is Sir Osbert's practice to be regarded as faulty, or should I revise my teaching on this point?

ANSWER. You are quite safe in teaching that the pronouns ending in *-self* should not be used as a subject except in apposition to a noun or a simple personal pronoun. The practice you note is a peculiarity of Sir Osbert Sitwell's style. It is not accepted English usage, though it is sometimes to be found in poetry, e.g. in Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*:

Myself, when young, did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument.

QUESTION. In an article by H. A. Cartledge entitled 'English in Russian Schools' (E.L.T., Vol. XIII, No. 4, p. 148) the author states that 'on the debit side is a certain unnaturalness in some of the phrases used by teachers in the classroom. . . . Contact with contemporary spoken English is one of the greatest needs of the

Russian teachers.' He then gives examples of such phrases, and amongst them he includes 'Now I shall show it to you', for which he would substitute 'Now I'll show you it'.

I am very surprised to find 'Now I'll show you it' given as correct. I have always been taught that when two pronouns occur together as direct and indirect objects of the same verb, the accusative must come before the dative, which may or may not be preceded by the preposition *to*. According to this rule the correct construction would be either 'Now I'll show it to you' or 'Now I'll show it you', but not 'Now I'll show you it'. Am I right? I should like your comments.

ANSWER. *I'll show it you* is heard in some parts of the country, but I do not think many speakers of Standard English would use it. *I will (not shall) show it to you*, or *I'll show it to you* is formally correct, but in the context and situation is unnatural, and it was solely on this ground that Mr Cartledge condemned it. One cannot learn to speak 'good English' merely by following prescribed grammatical rules; the question of what is natural in a particular situation always comes in, and I am sure that in a situation such as that described in the article most English people would say *Now I'll show you it*. But that does not mean that it is always acceptable. What is natural in one situation may not be in another: and much, too, depends on the rhythm of the sentence, or on the place where the stress falls. It is quite natural to say *If you're interested, I'll show you it* (stress on *show*), but it would be most unnatural, and therefore quite wrong, to say *When I've looked at it myself I'll show you it*, with the stress on *you*. We should have to say *I'll show it to you*. Similarly we should say *Bring me it*, with a heavy stress on *bring*, but we could not possibly use this order if the stress were transferred to *me*. Then we should have to say *Bring it to me*. All this, of course, goes to prove Mr Cartledge's point about the necessity of contact with contemporary spoken English.

The question is discussed in H. Whitehall's *Structural Essentials of English* (Longmans), p. 40, § 3.16, and you may find this helpful to you.

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.*, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (p. 178) you state that 'the verbal use of *trigger*' is fairly frequent nowadays, though it is not to be commended. It would not be found in writing with any pretensions to literary style. *Orbit*, as a verb, is quite new. It is unlikely to attain the currency of *trigger*, as, of course, its application, and the opportunities for using it, are very restricted. In any case it seems quite unnecessary.'

I should have said that the verbal use of *trigger* was quite common, since it is often met with in magazines like *Time*. Have they no pretensions to literary style? It may also be used without the adverb *off*, as in 'One shot should trigger the production of protective antibodies'. The opportunities for using *orbit* as a verb may not be so restricted as you suggest. Here are a few examples I have jotted down. 'Tell the wingman to orbit until helicopter arrives', 'Your story on Guinea successfully orbits the African world problem into prominence', 'The orbiting prices also smooth the road to merger', 'The U.S. had orbited the most advanced satellite in the young era of space'. I do not think *to orbit* is unnecessary. Can the sense be expressed in a better way?

ANSWER. It should perhaps have been made clear that the reply given in Vol. XIII, No. 4, referred to British English. One gathers that the publications you refer to are mainly American ones. There is no suggestion, of course, that these have no pretensions to literary style, but a number of words and constructions that are quite normal in American writing would strike British readers and writers, who

are more conservative in these things, as rather journalistic, and I think the verb *to trigger* is one.

As for *orbit*, again most of your quotations seem to be from American sources. This, of course, is no condemnation of them, though I must confess that the third one is completely meaningless to me, as it is to a number of other people to whom I have shown it. From a British point of view it seems to be an example of the worst type of journalese, and I should be surprised if many Americans did not feel the same about it. I suppose 'the road to merger' may have something to do with the merging of business enterprises, though that is only a guess: but what is meant by 'orbiting prices'? How can prices 'orbit'? Does it mean rising prices? If so, why not say so? Here certainly (again from a British point of view) the sense could be expressed in a better way. In your second sentence does *orbit*s really mean any more than the simple verb *brings*? If it does, what? It does not convey very much to an Englishman. In the fourth sentence, it is true, the meaning is quite clear, but *put into orbit* seems preferable. If the use of a noun as a verb sounds awkward or ugly, I do not consider it can be justified merely because it effects an economy of one or two words.

It is interesting to find that you have come across frequent uses of *orbit* as a verb, but the examples you give really bear out the point that was made in the original reply about the restricted possibilities of its use as compared with *trigger*. So many things can be 'triggered off' metaphorically, so that if we once accept this use of the word there is a very wide field for its application. But it seems that *orbit* must be used mainly within the technical field and in its more or less literal sense. Putting aside some of the more objectionable uses, there are comparatively few things that can 'orbit' or be 'orbited', in the figurative sense of the word.

QUESTION. Could you explain the reason for the *s* in *number ones* and *number threes* in the following sentences, especially as the singular verb *is* is used in one of them and a similar singular *consists* in another. 'Despite the grimy surroundings, he was dressed in Number Ones. For formal wear a sailor has two suits, a Number Three and a Number One. In the case of a petty officer, Number Threes is a working suit with a single-breasted jacket of rough serge, with red badges. Number Ones consists of a "best suit" of good cloth, double-breasted, with gold badges.'

ANSWER. *Number Ones* and *Number Threes* are probably service usage, and the plural form is probably used because each suit consists of more than one garment (just as a person often says that he takes size *eights*—not size *eight*—in shoes, thinking of each shoe being that size). The singular form (*Number One* and *Number Three*) is presumably the official name. The writer of the sentences takes the colloquial name, as used amongst the sailors, but then thinks of it as denoting one suit, and so uses the singular verb.



Book Reviews

FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLISH. D. Hicks. Students' Bk. 1 : viii+168 pp. 3s. 9d. ; Bk. 2 : viii+248 pp. 4s. 9d. ; Bk. 3 : viii+280 pp. 5s. 9d. Teacher's Bk. 1 : x+135 pp. 5s. ; Bk. 2 : ix+126 pp. 5s. ; Bk. 3 : x+195 pp. 6s. 6d. *Longmans*. Bks. 1 & 2, 1956 ; Bk. 3, 1958.

This is a well-planned and, on the whole, a well-executed course for adult learners of English. It seems to be intended mainly for Europeans, and indeed might not be very suitable for students with a completely non-European background.

Great stress is laid on oral work in the early stages, and much of the advice in the first book for teachers concerns the organization of 'Spoken Drills'. The important grammatical features introduced in Students' Book One are dealt with systematically in these drills before the pupil is introduced to them in written form. Problems of pronunciation are dealt with in general terms in the first ten chapters of the first Teacher's Book. It might have been more convenient for the teacher if all this had been brought together in a single comprehensive section on problems of pronunciation at the beginning of the book. He would then be able to refer back for urgently needed advice or information—always a more satisfactory procedure than referring forward. It is true that the teacher is advised to read the whole book before beginning the course, but it is perhaps a little optimistic to expect that many will do so.

The influence of structural linguistics on the preparation of language teaching material is growing rapidly, and it is not surprising to find the word 'structure(s)' given some prominence in these books. Unfortunately, the word is not used in the same way by all authors, with the result that many teachers, who have not had either the time or the opportunity to read books on general linguistics, are not quite clear what the difference is between what they used to refer to as 'constructions' and what they now see described as 'structures'. Some authors use the word structure for the basic syntactic features of the sentence within which substitution of lexical items can take place. Others apply it to any feature of the language at the phonemic, morphological, or syntactical level of language. In *Foundations of English* both the pupil and the teacher are left to discover for themselves the exact meaning of the word as used by the author. It would be helpful if in future editions a clear definition were given at the beginning of Teacher's Book One.

Special attention has been paid to grading in these books. The author has attempted to ensure 'that the structures should lead on, one to another, as logically as possible'. At times the density of the material might appear to offset some of the advantages of the grading, but this is where the teacher is expected to use his discretion. What at first sight may seem an over-loaded lesson (or 'Step') need not in practice overstrain the learning capacity of the student. Thus the large number of 'structures' and lexical items in Step One may, if necessary, be spread over as many as six teaching hours.

The principle of grading is not followed slavishly in the Reading texts, since the author wishes to give the student practice in 'reading beyond his learning—to guessing new expressions and to learning in a natural way, and not only by the artificial means of drills'. This leaves the author free to write, at a fairly early

stage, passages of 'interest' to the adult student which would be impossible otherwise. The method has its drawbacks, however, and may result in the teacher being at a loss to deal with the additional problems that arise as a consequence.

The notes on grammar in the Teacher's Books are both extensive and practical; and many tricky problems of usage are dealt with that are often overlooked in courses of this kind.

One of the most attractive features of the series, from the teacher's point of view, is the generous provision of exercises, all of which can be done without recourse to the learner's language. The author's advice to teachers to insist on their being done orally first is well worth following.

The reading passages are ingeniously arranged to introduce the student to a great variety of situations and characters. This is done first by introducing us to a farmer and his family, whose various activities form the subject matter of the first book, and then to a Swiss girl, whose experiences in three different environments (together with those of her friends) introduce the reader to a great many of the customs and institutions of Britain.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. R. M. Regberg. 128 pp.
Israel Teacher's Union, Tel Aviv. 1958. 1£3.

The author first justifies her advocacy of a form of the Direct Method, contrasting it with the Translation Method, but making the now generally accepted reservations. She rightly emphasizes the importance of giving pupils as soon as possible the ability to *use* English, the sense of achievement being vital to the maintenance of interest. The procedures are always ostensive and active in the early stages and include the use of objects, pictures and—what could be more natural for the teaching of imperative forms and the names of parts of the body?—Swedish exercises.

The first two chapters give general principles and examples of presentation techniques only. They are followed by chapters on Writing, Reading, Word Mastery, Functional Grammar, Lesson Structure, Remedial Teaching, Discipline, and Aspects of Language Learning. At the end of the book there is a collection of Language Games, Reading Games, Writing and Spelling Games, Proverbs, Songs and Poems, and a Bibliography.

The kind of cursive handwriting exemplified in the chapter on writing is reasonably clear with the exception of a few of the capital letters, the essential outlines of which are obscured by flourishes and loops; but the teaching of handwriting cannot adequately be dealt with in six pages.

The chapter on Functional Grammar fills twenty-seven pages. The author touches on the grading and teaching of many of the grammatical problems which have to be dealt with in the first three years of English. There is much good advice, though one would not agree with certain details of the recommended grading and presentation. For instance, it is better to introduce the simple past with adverbs of past time than without them. This makes the teaching of the present perfect easier at a later stage. Whether this tense should be introduced only in the third year is open to question; many teachers would prefer to introduce it quite soon after the simple past and to teach it contrastively with this tense.

The dangers of concentrating on considerations of form in the grading of material are well illustrated in the sequence of short sentences suggested for use

with a picture of a baby. They run as follows: *The baby sees. The baby hears. The baby sleeps. The baby smells. The baby breathes*, etc. The fourth sentence could have only one meaning to the native speaker, though this is certainly not that intended by the author.

As sentence structure is of such great importance in the teaching of English, the subject should receive a good deal more attention than it does. Instead of being disposed of in a few words at the end of the chapter on Functional Grammar it might have been dealt with earlier and at greater length—if necessary at the expense of the notes on the teaching of adverbs, which add little to the advice given in earlier chapters. More should have been said about the position of adverbs in the sentence, countable and uncountable nouns, the teaching of the anomalous finites and similar matters.

The notes on Lesson Structure should help teachers to get away from the unnatural division of English into such 'subjects' as Composition, Grammar, Dictation, etc.

The author stresses the importance of songs and poems as an integral part of the language teaching. She would give the meaning 'by means of voice intonation, motion, or with the aid of objects and pictures'. While this may work with such rhymes as 'One, two, Buckle my shoe' (re-written here as 'One, two, Tie my shoe'), it's hard to imagine how the meaning of:

I never saw a purple cow,
I never hope to see one;
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one

can be expressed other than by translation if it is used before the vocabulary and sentence-patterns it contains have been taught. In teaching a rhyme or a song it is better to get the meaning cleared up at once by translation and then let the children hear it repeatedly and learn it.

It is extremely difficult to find songs and rhymes which are neither too infantile nor too difficult linguistically for the 10+ learner. Nursery rhymes are probably more acceptable to the adult than to the child in or approaching his teens. But there is no reason why in songs and rhymes the level of language used should not be somewhat in advance of that reached in the graded material, provided the two things are kept apart; in other words, provided a line like *Fast the moments fly away* does not tempt the pupil to offer *Fast my father drove his car* in free composition. Skilful teaching will prevent this sort of thing from happening, and it is skilful teaching that the book is aiming at. Nevertheless, a few words on the possibility of such analogies, and how to deal with them if they appear, would have been useful.

Throughout the book there is very little attempt at a comparison of English with Hebrew at the various levels. This is wise, for although the medium of instruction may be Hebrew, the major interference is likely to come from other languages—German, Polish, Rumanian, etc.—depending on the mother tongue of each individual. It is almost impossible, where the group being taught is linguistically heterogeneous, to reach any satisfactory grading of the target language other than by working from the apparently simple to the apparently complex in that language without reference to any other.

In her Preface the author says that 'the basic principles and the application thereof may well be adapted to the teaching of any foreign language'. This is true so long as one of the basic principles is clearly understood to be the careful grading of the material on the basis of the structure of the target language itself;

though this statement would, of course, need modification where the pupils constituted a linguistically homogeneous group.

ENGLISH SPEECH. C. McCallien and P. Strevens. Bk. 1: 18 pp. 1s. 6d.; Teachers' Bk. 1: 63 pp. 4s.; Bk. 2: 25 pp. 1s. 10d.; Teachers' Bk. 2: 82 pp. 4s. *Longmans*. 1958.

The pupils' books consist of large, agreeable drawings in black and red, one to each page, of an African boy and girl performing the exercises described in the teachers' books. These descriptions are clear and precise, giving the instructions to the pupils verbatim.

The book is carefully written and thoroughly cross-referenced, the work of two phoneticians who understand children. Everyone interested in the teaching of pronunciation, whether in Africa or not, should study it. Phonetic theory is here transmuted into drills and ideas which the children can grasp. 'Frogs'—an exercise for tongue control—the pictures show an open mouth and an out-curling tongue; 'Snakes'—an exercise for steady control of the breath—the picture shows snakes only ('Pretend that you are a snake, and that you are going to hiss because you are angry, like this, sss. Take a long breath while I count 1-2-3-4, and ssss... Yes, that was a very cross snake indeed... Now this time we are going to be very quiet snakes...')

This is excellent, especially for the primary school—and we need not make a fuss about some of the pictures: that for **t** and **d**, for instance, looks (inevitably) like that for **l** (Exercises 35 and 36), and **g** (Exercise 34) is not much different. Doubtless these are not meant to be adequate diagrams of the formation of these sounds, but only visual aids to interest. We may cavil more reasonably at one or two of the exercises themselves. Can a child really feel the voice in a **g** normally pronounced, for instance? Is it sufficient to tell the unphonetically trained teacher who cannot pronounce an English **r**, merely to draw back the tongue from **z**?

Mrs McCallien and Mr Strevens rightly say in their General Introduction to the Course both that 'the language habits which a child acquires when he first meets a second language should be of a high standard, since they can only be altered with difficulty', and that 'the younger a child is when he begins to learn a second language, the more likely he will be to acquire the language easily and rapidly'. In the following paragraph they refer to the shortage of material for the teaching of English pronunciation. Yet it is clear that *English Speech* can, and perhaps should, be used before the English course starts, not only to 'train the organs in making sounds which will be used later in English' (p. 5) and to train the listening habits 'fundamental to teaching and to learning the pronunciation of any language' (p. 2), but to ensure that when regular instruction in English begins, the intensive pronunciation-work is focused on particular difficulties and geared to the rest of the course. The authors tell us clearly how to use their admirable book on its own, but if we follow their Teaching Programme day by day and week by week after the primary course in English has begun, we shall find ourselves failing to correct, in our five-minute daily periods of pronunciation practice, some of the faulty sounds which have begun to crop up in the rest of our English teaching. The trained teacher must select from the book, a highly praiseworthy piece of work, and compile his own Teaching Programme.

Book Three is in preparation, and gramophone records of the drills and exercises are obtainable from the Linguaphone Institute, London.

AN INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH COURSE FOR ADULT LEARNERS. D. H. Spencer and A. S. Hornby. 210 pp. O.U.P. 1959. 6s.

About a quarter of this revision course for adults consists of reading passages, slightly more than a quarter of notes, and the rest of exercises. There is an index of words the use of which has been discussed in the book. The standard is approximately that of the Cambridge Lower Certificate examination.

The passages are varied in form and content, and would appeal also to older children. There are dialogues entitled 'Learning to Drive' and 'What Do You Read?' (naming the simplest modern authors), descriptive pieces such as 'Making a Film' and 'By Car across Europe', letter sequences headed 'Applying for a Job' and 'Summer Holidays', and some passages of verse. Most have been written by the authors themselves, in a plain straightforward style free of slang and containing few colloquialisms. They are not graded according to difficulty.

In the notes and exercises attention is paid to a number of important grammatical and syntactical features of English, such as the use of tenses and relative pronouns, and there are sections on the writing of paragraphs and essays, on the choice of the right word, on 'do' and 'make', and (how badly needed by most foreign learners of English) on punctuation.

A great deal of useful material has been packed into this little book, which may be confidently recommended as much to the self-taught student as to the class teacher of English, each of whom must choose from it the exercises which apply to his particular needs. As the authors suggest in their Preface, the book is well suited to those who can 'apply their own intelligence and powers of analysis to language problems'. It is not for younger children, who cannot as a rule do that.

An Intermediate English Course is not a graded course of any kind—such a course would refrain, for example, from listing all the main uses of *in* together (p. 111)—nor is it a work of reference, but rather something between: perhaps we might call it a study-book. It is remarkably free of misprints.

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS, MARCH 1958. Franklin Parker. 38 pp. University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Institute of Education.

This report, which is obtainable from the Institute's Publications Officer (Private Bag 167H, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia), reflects African problems and should also be of wider interest. It summarizes five papers given by members of the conference and six study-group reports. The conference itself was the culmination of a systematic enquiry, carried out by Professor and Mrs Franklin Parker of the University of Texas, into English-teaching in the African schools of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The importance of the African languages themselves is repeatedly stressed, by Professor N. H. Mackenzie for instance, who says: 'Vernacular language study in our secondary schools provides a strong taproot for our African pupils.' He points out that the ideas offered to Africans in English are sometimes 'culturally too remote for assimilation'. Mr K. D. Leaver maintains that 'the African' wants 'literature with African scenes *wherein he can readily identify himself*' (reviewer's italics): but it is interesting to note that 'publishable manuscripts in

the vernacular', according to Mr Leaver, are received only 'from well-educated Africans who are fluent in English'. If this is so, the acquisition of English is but one aspect of the growth of literacy, education, and national and racial self-awareness, and thus what is said about taproots must be taken to heart all the more.

Study-group I observes that 'the transition from the child's world to the world of the English-speaking child is much too abrupt and complete' and declares, reasonably, that English and the vernacular should be kept well apart during the first few years of instruction. Both this group and another (III) emphasize that the orderly expression of thought should be trained in the home language first.

More than once the report refers to the African pupil's thirst for knowledge, and more than once to the scarcity of suitable books and material. Mr Leaver says that commercial publishers cannot cater for the 'full needs of the adult African public' because this public is not yet large enough: the subsidizing of cheap book-production is thus necessary. He predicts also that 'in twenty years love stories and detective stories will come into their own in African reading tastes much as they did in Britain in the 1920's': Africans will be reading for pleasure as well as for facts.

Linguistically some of the contributors are on treacherous ground. Professor Mackenzie, for instance, speaks of 'advanced languages', and Professor B. A. Fletcher says that 'language carries with it the spiritual values on which it is based': a comforting fallacy.

There are plenty of good ideas about English-teaching, as well as some which are not so good. Mrs M. Rive stresses the value of beginning early and in an interesting way, and avoiding translation. She believes also in the thorough drill of sentence-patterns and spelling, and in separating 'the language work' from stories—the former she thinks spoils the latter. Mr Davies gives some sound practical advice (pp. 12-13), and Group II, deplored the unintelligibility of 'Bantu-English', wisely concludes that this is due mainly to a lack of teachers with practical phonetic training.

The group reports on the relationship between the vernacular and English, on reading, grammar and comprehension, on the teaching of literature, and on comparative methods of teaching English, are also worth study. Among the sensible proposals made are that, to help train the habit of reading for enjoyment, comprehension questions should be transferred from children's story books to the accompanying teachers' books. And one of the groups healthily declares: 'African children should be allowed to read what they like, even good comics.'

An interesting record of an encouraging conference. It would be still more interesting to know what comes out of it.

GET IT RIGHT. H. M. Burton. 95 pp. *English Universities Press.* 1959. 6s.

This short book fulfils the promise of its bright jacket and forceful title. It is intended for English people who are not quite sure of speaking or writing correctly. It would also be interesting and helpful to foreign teachers of English; the style might be too difficult for their pupils.

The arrangement, like that of Fowler's large and complete work, *Modern English Usage*, is alphabetical. Connoisseurs will enjoy looking up in both books such points as split infinitive, 'different to', and French derivatives, and comparing verdicts, since Mr Burton, like the brothers Fowler, rides his own hobby-horses.

Sections on usage, as distinct from language, which are recommended to foreign students include: How to begin and end a letter; Forms of address like 'Esq.', 'Hon.' and 'Rev.' (but unfortunately not 'Sir'); and English educational names, e.g. 'College' and 'University'. Other useful points dealt with are: the old enemy word-order—which crops up under 'not', 'neither... nor', 'only', in a good article on the unattached participle (rather curiously listed as the 'hanging' participle), *et passim*; spelling, e.g. 'advice' and 'advise', 'practice' and 'practise'; punctuation, a subject apparently entirely neglected by too many foreign teachers, if one is to judge by their pupils' examination papers, often punctuated, if at all, either with a universal dash or according to their own national convention; verbs often confused, as 'lie' and 'lay', 'fly' and 'flow' and their tenses; comparisons with 'more', 'few' and 'less'; and a not too pedantic guide to modern uses of 'shall' and 'will'.

Mr Burton keeps an open mind on modernisms generally. Overseas teachers always and understandably find it hard to follow the evolution of a language they perhaps learnt in their own youth, and books can give some help with this.

The most commendable quality of the book is that, being intended for speakers capable of saying 'he had ate', or 'I would of come', it wisely keeps grammatical rules to a minimum. Examples take the first, the largest, and, in some sections, the only place. Would that all writers on English would go and do likewise!

BETTER SPOKEN ENGLISH. G. L. Barnard. 197 pp. *Macmillan*. 1959. 6s.

A teacher has two tasks, first to interest his students in what he is going to teach them and then to teach them it accurately and efficiently. Mr Barnard's book is designed to help him in both of these tasks. As the preface to the book rightly says, 'without enjoyment much of our teaching is wasted'. Numerous and witty illustrations at appropriate places in the text play their own part in adding to the enjoyment.

The book, however, provides not only interest and enjoyment. It also offers an efficiently-constructed programme of training in the English sounds. A set of four exercises is devoted to each sound. The first practises the sound in sentences; the second is a piece of verse in which the sound occurs frequently; the third is a 'lengthening sentence' exercise involving the cumulative addition of words to a basic phrase, for example 'He's swimming. He's swimming in the river. He's swimming in the river with Tim . . .' and so on. The purpose of this exercise is to improve fluency by getting students to read off increasingly long sentences without pausing. The last exercise in each set is a piece of continuous prose for reading aloud.

There are notes on each exercise which call attention to special points in it and indicate what the exercise sets out to achieve. This is a pleasant change from the all-too-frequent books in which exercises appear to be provided because the teacher wants something to set for homework or to give marks on or to keep a class quiet while he fills in his weekly lesson record or for any one of a dozen other and equally unjustifiable reasons. Mr Barnard wisely avoids typographical machinery to indicate how he expects a phrase to be read. He does this by notes instead. The notes are brief, but lucid. They are particularly valuable in calling attention to the shifts of meaning and implication involved in shifts of stress.

The only possible flaw in the book is its provision of blank spaces at the end of each section for the student's own notes and material. This impairs its usefulness

in institutions using class sets, except for the doodler or the bored boy at the back, who will almost certainly draw portraits of the teacher in the spaces. Even for those who own their copies the system seems difficult to justify, since some of the spaces, for instance those on pages 108 and 109, provide very little room for the notes of anyone whose handwriting is at all large or spidery.

THIS IS OUR CHANCE. James E. Henshaw. 95 pp. *U.L.P.* 1956. 2s. 9d.

In the three plays printed in this little book the author has tried to provide Drama with a West African setting, for he argues that occasionally in West Africa one sees 'well known plays staged by good players, but the scenes of these plays always take place in surroundings far removed from the Africans' own'. Mr Henshaw's plays are certainly African in setting and theme and points such as family duties, migration from country to town and so forth are discussed in dramatic form. But, alas, no one of the plays has any originality in theme, style or characterization. The flavour is definitely one of the feebler Nativity/Passion Play Type. Mr Henshaw would not claim to have written great drama. His plays might certainly be of value in secondary schools and training colleges but they show no sign of being the beginnings of a real West African Drama.

THE 'BETTER ENGLISH' READERS. All edited or abridged by E. A. L. Gaskin. About 125 pp. each. Variously 2s. 6d. or 2s. 9d. Grade I Titles: *Pinokkio*, *Tales from the Heart of Africa*, *Round the World Tales*, *Tales of Robin Hood*. Grade II Titles: *Wanderings in South America*, *Tales and Fables of Old*, *Grimm's Folk Tales*, *The Land of Seals*. *U.L.P.* 1953/54.

The 'Better English' Readers are designed to provide interesting and suitable supplementary reading material for overseas students of English. There are, in fact, a total of four grades of reader. These readers, consisting of novels, short stories, fables and plays, are abridged and annotated where necessary. In the case of Grades I & II under review the texts have been slightly simplified. The editor assumes that readers of these grades will already possess a minimum vocabulary of some 2,500 and 3,500 words respectively, and only those words that fall outside this range (as indicated in the *Thorndike Junior Dictionary*) have been explained. At the end of each book there are some questions and exercises on the text. There is no harm in the questions, but if the class teacher can do no better it is a pity. The questions and exercises are just too few. This may be unfair to Mr Gaskin for his books more than fulfil his aim. The matter is interesting and the style generally satisfactory. We can never have too many supplementary readers and at the price published the books are excellent value for money.

ABIMBOLU. Jean L. Jacoby. 112 pp. *U.L.P.* 1955. 2s. 6d.

This is a good, honest, forward-moving adventure story and as such is to be much commended. The snag is that the style is extraordinarily uneven. At one moment it is easy, forthright and colloquial, at the next it becomes pompous,

maudlin and sentimental. These lapses impart most frequently a feeling of patronage that may in fact be disguised humour. A puzzling book in this way. Nevertheless it is well worth its place on class library shelves as supplementary reading material.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WEST AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

J. W. A. Thorburn. 100 pp. O.U.P. 1959. 3s. 6d.

In his prefatory note the author makes clear his purpose. It is to give 'general suggestions for possible teaching methods and organization in West African Primary Schools'. Nowhere does Mr Thorburn attempt to pontificate or urge ideas that are revolutionary or impractical. On every page, indeed in every sentence, commonsense and wisdom strike home. Thus the book is bound to gain the sympathy of all who read it, be they teachers, teacher-trainers or supervisors.

The book reflects the author's intimate knowledge of education and its problems in West Africa. But so full is it of generally applicable question and comment—and so modest is its price—that *all* teachers in *every* country ought to own a copy. The book is only a hundred pages long, yet it is crammed with help. The teacher who can read Mr Thorburn's book and in honesty answer to each point, 'I do', or 'My school is like this', or 'My class do this', is a teacher indeed. Those who cannot thus answer should set their house in order, for there is not one point raised that is beyond the abilities of any teacher worthy of the name. Mr Thorburn's book is an excellent catechism. His catalogue of sins of omission and commission is frighteningly complete! His counsel is kindly, encouraging, practical and sensible.

It is a joy to find responsibility put fairly and squarely upon the teacher's shoulders. Too many teachers in too many countries show a visitor poor writing, dirty walls, untidy premises, tattered books, bad spelling, ill-disciplined children, and say, 'Look what I have to put up with'. This book makes the teacher's responsibility more than clear.

There is little in the book that is 'new'. In fact, much might be regarded as 'old-fashioned'. But on all the problems of the primary school, starting with the actual putting up of a building and ranging through time-tabling, health, methods, conduct, examinations, libraries, and difficult parents, the author speaks sensa.

For the conscientious teacher this book is a splendid check-sheet of achievements and standards. For the slacker it would be a pedagogical Last Judgment!

DAY BY DAY. A. Scotland. 176 pp. Odhams. 1959. 5s.

This well-produced book contains twenty-nine passages of contemporary writing reprinted from newspapers and periodicals. The extracts are chosen to appeal to the British schoolboy and girl of about fifteen years old, and therefore they are not all of them suitable in subject-matter and vocabulary for the foreign learner of English. Their range is wide, however, covering science, exploration, sport, detection, leisure-time pursuits, and many other subjects; most teachers, even of adults, would be able to find something which would appeal to classes with a fair knowledge of English.

In a review of Dr Scotland's earlier anthology, *A Mirror of the Times* (E.L.T., XI, 1) it was hinted that the exercises might have been somewhat fuller.

The same observation has to be made of the present volume. Dr Scotland clearly feels, with some justification, that in this sort of work it is really the teacher's job to devise exercises suited to the needs of his own pupils.

ENGLISH FOR THE CERTIFICATE. Janet I. Scobie (revised by Verner Bickley). 135 pp. *Allen and Unwin*. 1959. 5s.

Each year thousands of overseas students take the English Language papers of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. The present book is carefully planned to cover the syllabus for that examination; it would also be useful to students taking similar papers for the Malayan Certificate of Education or the G.C.E. ('O' Level). There are three chapters on the essay, one on shorter forms of composition (letters, reports, statements, etc.), and one each on précis, interpretation, and general questions. Under each of these headings there is much sound advice on how to tackle the type of question that is set. Each chapter contains plenty of exercises and there are fourteen pages of specimen tests at the end of the book. Answers are given where appropriate.

The book is designed to give help to the South-East Asian candidate preparing for the examination by himself. More space is therefore given than would be normal—and also than is desirable from the point of view of educational theory—to the correction of bad linguistic habits; very many of the exercises are of the type which asks the student to 'correct the errors in the following sentences'. The authors are clearly very familiar with the needs of the Asian examinee, and their book will be of definite practical help both to learners and to teachers during the certificate year.

Books Received

A BOOK OF MODERN PROSE. Douglas Brown, ed. 288 pp. *Harrap*. 1957. (Harrap's English Classics.) 7s. 6d.

CRANFORD. Elisabeth C. Gaskell. xii+234 pp. *Longmans*. 1958. (Heritage of Literature series.) 4s. 3d.

CRITICAL EXERCISES. P. R. Heather. 244 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. 7s. 6d.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS. Charles Dickens. xxviii+580 pp. *Longmans*. 1958. (Heritage of Literature series.) 6s. 6d.

GREAT EXPLOITS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. G. I. Lamb. 219 pp. *Harrap*. 1959. (Harrap's Modern English series.) 6s. 6d.

IN SEARCH OF ALADDIN'S LAMP. Max Voegeli (retold by E. C. Parnwell). 62 pp. *O.U.P.* 1959. (Oxford Progressive English series.) 1s. 4d.

JANE EYRE. Charlotte Brontë. xxxiii+604 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. (Heritage of Literature series.) 6s. 6d.

MANKIND AGAINST THE KILLERS (abridged). James Hemming. xiv+143 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. (Bridge series.) 3s. 9d.

THE MODERN ENGLISH READERS, Books I-III. H. J. L. Robbie, General Editor. 160 pp. each. *Harrap*. 1959. 5s. 6d. each.

POETRY FOR FIFTH-FORMS. F. B. Pinion, ed. 256 pp. *Odhams*. 1959. 6s. 6d.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Jane Austen. xxvii+417 pp. *Longmans*. 1958. (Heritage of Literature series.) 6s.

RICHES IN A LITTLE ROOM: ninety short poems. Alan Price, ed. 95 pp. *Methuen*. 1959. 4s. 6d.

THE SECRET AGENT. Joseph Conrad. xxvii+324 pp. *Longmans*. 1958. (Heritage of Literature series.) 6s. 6d.

SWEET WITCH. Richard Llewellyn. 280 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. (Heritage of Literature series.) 5s.

THE TALISMAN (simplified). Sir Walter Scott. vii+128 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. (Longmans Simplified English series.) 2s. 10d.

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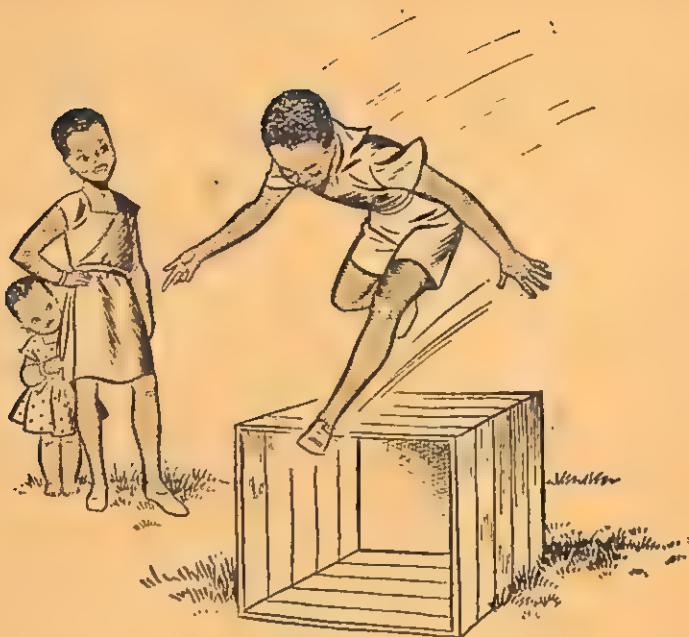
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English Literature and the Film—III

Some comments on five films of 1959 which were derived from well-known English novels or plays.

ROGER MANVELL

The two most controversial British films of the year were both based on works by new, young writers—*Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne and *Room at the Top* by John Braine. Both were the first feature films to be made by their directors, Tony Richardson and Jack Clayton. Together these films presented a fresh and strikingly adult element in British film production, which during the past few years has from the creative point of view been in grave danger of atrophy through yielding almost entirely to the safe treatment of safe subjects, aiming at popularity without controversy. It needed a sense of adventure to conquer the innate, all-pervading laziness of audiences who are increasingly tethered to their television sets, and these films had the necessary courage to speak out for something new.

Look Back in Anger and *Room at the Top* have achieved success with the public, particularly the latter. Not that they are free from faults. Both, too, give expression to the cult of self-hatred which has its parallel in certain of the films of the *nouvelle vague* in France. Osborne's success with *Look Back in Anger* in the theatre was, I believe, essentially a dramatist's success rather than the result of the lucky or unlucky publicity that arose out of his play on its first appearance, the publicity that proclaimed the movement of the 'angry young men'. Anger is nothing new in the arts, and has little to do with the real significance of this play. The fact is that Osborne can write the kind of dialogue which lives and breathes in the mouths of good actors, and at its best carries a significance beyond the immediate needs of the situation or the action. He possesses genuine humanity and compassion, and this informs the most revealing of his scenes.

In the play, the part of Jimmy Porter was created by a young actor who gave it anger without any of the compensating quality of a noble soul in agony, a poet for whom life has no savour, which Richard Burton's interpretation of the part in the film carries throughout. The film, therefore, has certain romantic overtones which the production of the play did not possess, or certainly not so markedly. In the film Porter's peculiar agony is not unlike what you might expect from

Hamlet without Shakespeare; he is trapped in a world in which the people with whom he should be on terms of affection become symbols of the things he most hates. He loathes the comfortable blindness and hypocrisy of the British bourgeoisie; his wife belongs to this class and he makes her life unbearable with his loathing. Her reaction is not unlike that of Ophelia to Hamlet. Richard Burton's reading of the part makes Porter's anger not the result of cynicism or conscious superiority, or even of bad manners; it is the outcome of sheer, raw suffering. Self-pity is too small a term.

Osborne writes with sympathy of this young man and woman imprisoned in hatreds that are the result of Porter's maladjustment. In the end they are reunited in both play and film, after his unfaithfulness with a girl who has also been the victim of his verbal persecutions. It can be argued that Porter should have been left to resolve this phase of his struggle without the intrusion of women. But John Osborne seems to be a romantic in spite of the bitterness in his heart, and he allows both the film and the play their more or less happy ending. Porter's hatred of the world and its representatives in his own immediate circle is offset by his natural tenderness for Ma Tanner, an old widow who has befriended him in the past and set him up with the sweet-stall from which he makes his meagre living. Poor, over-blown, warm-hearted Ma Tanner—wonderfully played by Dame Edith Evans—brings out the hidden warmth in Jimmy Porter's nature which lies beneath his wounds, the same warmth that enables him to befriend the poor Indian who is trying to set up a stall of his own in the market, though everyone is against him. Jimmy Porter's hatred seems ultimately to spring from frustrated love, which neither his wife nor his mistress can relieve. In the end he is given a second chance by his wife, who has returned to him because she feels she cannot live without him. She is played by Mary Ure, John Osborne's wife, who appeared very successfully in this part in the stage production.

John Braine's *Room at the Top* has had a phenomenal success both as its author's first published novel and as a film. It exposes, not without a certain pathos, the mean soul of Joe Lampton, a young clerk of working-class origin in a small industrial town in the north of England. He envies the rich their success and the luxuries their wealth can buy, and he uses his wits and his charm to win the adolescent affections of the daughter of the town's leading manufacturer. Meanwhile, his own immaturity is exposed in a parallel love-affair that he conducts with an unhappily married woman older than himself, a woman whose nationality is changed in the film from English to French so that she may be played by Simone Signoret, who

gives a magnificent performance as a mature woman anchoring her love in this unworthy though sexually satisfying young man. Lampton wins his success, but at a price that makes even him flinch—an effective and revealing end to the film and one far removed from the more cynical kinds of happy ending that are still only too common in films 'tailored' for the box-office. *Room at the Top*, in spite of some indifferent performances in the smaller roles, deserves the attention it has won both inside and outside Britain; in addition to Simone Signoret, there is Laurence Harvey giving a superbly apt portrayal as Lampton, while Heather Sears brings real understanding to the young girl so foolishly in love.

The film retains the brash, hard honesty of the book, which is no delicate work of letters, but a truthfully observed and penetrating study of the kind of young man a wholly materialistic society, or section of a society, can only too readily produce. As a creator of literature, John Braine in *Room at the Top* has all the words at his command to say what needs to be said about the kind of people he portrays. He is a realist without special literary pretensions, and the film is as sharply observed in its performances as the book was in its writing.

A film which naturally enough caused some discussion when it was first shown was Sir Alec Guinness's own adaptation of Joyce Cary's celebrated novel, *The Horse's Mouth*. When it was published in 1944, the book was compared to the work of Dickens; critics were fascinated by its sheer passionate vitality, the vigour and idiosyncrasy of its style and the independence of its theme and characterization. The story is presented as written by a vagabond artist called Gulley Jimson whose sole interest is his art; he has no interest in normal social behaviour or normal rules of conduct. He lies and steals and starves in order to paint. Everyone is tired of his tricks, and only an old barmaid called Coker still retains any feeling for him beneath her waspish attacks on his inconsiderate attitude to her when she helps him.

It was doubtless his instinct as an actor that drew Sir Alec Guinness to this story, for Gulley Jimson provides him with a part ideally suited to his particular sense of character and humour. The down-at-heel clothes, the bristle of unshaven beard, the limping trot leading up to a purposive grab at something he wants, and the gloating care with which he handles his brush in the old barge which is his home and his studio, were all grist to this actor's mill.

The film inevitably dilutes to some extent the philosophy that lies behind the eccentric humour of this novel. This is not only because

of Guinness's own performance: Kay Walsh as Coker, Renée Houston as Sara, Jimson's cunning and resourceful wife who knows how to sell his paintings (provided she possesses them) for large sums, and Ernest Thesiger's Hickson, the wealthy old man who collects Gulley's pictures and whom Gulley persecutes on the telephone, are all expert comic performances. The paintings which are liberally shown on the screen are by John Bratby, a vigorous artist whose work has attracted a great deal of added attention as a result of this film.

There were some protests that the character of Gulley Jimson in the film has been reduced in stature from an eccentric genius to a farcical clown. But all his comic actions in the film point his unconquerable desire to paint, and his childish bad behaviour is entirely dedicated to his art! Once created, his pictures have no further interest for him, and the climax of the film comes when, with the help of an army of art students, he creates a vast mural on the sole surviving wall of a bombed-out chapel; the picture completed, he happily joins in with the demolition workers when they come to destroy the building. It is the act of creation that matters, not the preservation of the finished work. In the book the collapse of the wall all but kills him; in the film he is permitted a Chaplinesque exit towards the horizon as he sails down the Thames in his ancient barge in search of more surfaces to paint.

Lastly, two plays by Bernard Shaw appeared in filmed versions during 1959—*The Devil's Disciple* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

The Devil's Disciple emerged as something of a curiosity. First of all it is remarkably short, playing less than an hour and a half; secondly, it has been considerably changed in order to feature General Burgoyne and make him the principal character playing opposite to Richard, the devil's disciple, who impersonates the pastor and allows himself to be arrested and nearly brought to his death for the sake of a man who is bitterly critical of his way of life. The sardonic wit of Sir Laurence Olivier's performance as Burgoyne, whether he is speaking Shaw's lines or the inventions of the screenplay, gives this film what value it has.

Shaw has almost always been unfortunate in the screen adaptations of his work. Only *Pygmalion* retained a considerable deal of its original's quality in the theatre. *Major Barbara* and *Caesar and Cleopatra* were still-born monuments; *Androcles and the Lion* a travesty with its ill-written supplementary dialogue. But now in Anthony Asquith's version of *The Doctor's Dilemma* a far happier compromise between Shaw's verbal wit and the cinema's observant

camera has been achieved in a film which is always a pleasure to the eye. *The Doctor's Dilemma* is a delight on the stage, where in scene after scene the group of distinguished, pompous and opinionated specialists of the Edwardian period debunk each other and expose in the Shavian manner the fallibility of science; Shaw distrusted doctors and the politics of medicine where human life is at stake.

Sir Colenso Ridgeon, newly knighted for his contribution to medical science, which includes a cure for tuberculosis still in its experimental stages, has to choose whether the remaining bed in the ward devoted to his researches shall go to a worthy but utterly undistinguished doctor or to an unworthy but wholly brilliant artist. Ridgeon chooses the doctor, and the bigamous artist is left to die in the hands of one of Ridgeon's colleagues; this is all the more unfortunate and dubious because Sir Colenso, a wealthy bachelor, has begun to covet the artist's beautiful mistress, a woman in the pre-Raphaelite tradition, who can see no real harm in the immoral ways of the man she believes to be her husband.

It is one of Anthony Asquith's particular skills that he can so successfully bring to the screen plays that depend on an elegant and meticulous production. You may remember his work in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *The Doctor's Dilemma* consists of lengthy verbal exchanges between the specialists, all of whom have Shaw's articulate capacity. There is virtually no action, even when the doctors visit the dying artist's studio; everything is conversation, variations resulting from discussion of the situation and its moral implications. To transfer such dramatic material to the screen is not to achieve action; all that can be expected is the careful, even subtle observation of the speakers in close shots. Once the succession of shots has been planned, then it is the director's responsibility to let the observant camera choose the emphatic moments now in this performance, now in that; to look now at this small group, now at that in order to make what is said reveal character through close observation of the speaker. It is in this work that Anthony Asquith is specially skilled; the continuity of what happens follows entirely the flow of the speech, because this interchange of words is, in fact, the main action. This film is exact in its observance of Shaw's work; all movement is dictated by the needs of the dialogue.

Asquith has assembled a formidable cast for the doctors. Alastair Sim, Robert Morley, Felix Aylmer and John Robinson speak Shaw's words as they should be spoken; in the comparatively thankless part of Jennifer, the artist's wife, Leslie Caron is the image of protective beauty, fighting like some protesting bird of paradise for her lover's

life. Only with the casting of Dirk Bogarde as Louis Dubedat, the artist, do I quarrel. Dirk Bogarde is an actor of considerable character, but the bias of his personality is towards honesty; his expression is quiet and assured, his eye direct and trustworthy. And this is wrong for Dubedat—who should be glib, specious, ingratiating, deceitful—a 'rascally genius' as Shaw called him. Shaw allows him speech after speech of self-justification, speeches that in the end make a character of some depth out of him. It is a wonderful part to play, full of the implications of evil genius. But Bogarde plays him quite straight, even honestly, and this considerably weakens the impact of the film. Nevertheless, it remains one of the most satisfying translations of Shaw to the screen.

ENGLISH STUDIES, AMSTERDAM

Among articles and notes which have recently appeared in *English Studies* are the following which may be of special interest to readers of *English Language Teaching*:

Vol. XL—No. 4 (Swiss Number): B. Charleston: The English Linguistic Invasion of Switzerland. M. Schubiger: The Expanded Form of the Verb and Intonation.

Vol. XL—No. 5 (Swedish Number): Y. Olsson—The English Verb in its Contexts.

Vol. XL—No. 6 (Danish Number): H. Sorensen: The function of the Definite Article in Modern English. K. Schibsbye: The Grammatical Aspect of Semantics.

ERRATA.

In line 10 of L. A. Hill's article 'The Teaching of Reading' (*E.L.T.* XIV, 1, p. 18) the names of the letters in the word *cat* should read /sɪ:/—/eɪ/—/tɪ:/.

The author of *An Introduction to Modern Linguistics* mentioned in the footnote to *E.L.T.*, XIII, 4, p. 169, is L. R. Palmer.

The Articles in English

H. A. CARTLEDGE

The purpose of the remarks that follow is to consider the behaviour of the articles in English, to point out one or two contemporary tendencies in their use, and to make suggestions for the teaching of them in the light of these tendencies.

The author has adult pupils particularly in mind; he recognizes the fondness of many adult learners for 'rules', but wishes to emphasize that even where adults are concerned the English language can be taught efficiently without over-insistence on analysis and rule-giving. He also wishes to make clear at the outset that in examples quoted in the course of this article he is drawing on his own usage. Other English speakers might say some of the phrases in a different but equally correct way—another argument against teaching by 'rules'.

Over-simplification of rules may give rise to misconceptions about the use of the articles, since it may lead to the teaching of half-truths as whole truths and fail to prepare pupils for the so-called 'exceptions' which, far from proving the rule, show that it is a rough and ready guide but not a complete statement. An example of the unsatisfactory statements which are given as rules for the study of articles is the division of nouns into 'countables' and 'uncountables'. This is a convenient and a useful teaching device. It helps to determine many of the common instances in which nouns will or will not require an article. We may quote the maxim 'Patience is a virtue' to a student and tell him that patience is an abstract and an uncountable noun and that therefore it will never require the indefinite article. If we do so, we have given him most of the information about the noun *patience*, but not quite all. We have not allowed for a case like this: 'Doctors and nurses who work amongst the sick require an inexhaustible patience.' This sentence appears to contradict the rule.

So long as such cases occur they prevent the rule from being a complete statement. A noun like 'pleasure' can move happily through all the classifications of nouns. 'It is a pleasure to listen to good music'. 'The pleasures of a country walk are boundless'. 'There are pleasures within the mind which are beyond the reach of insensitive people'. 'We can take pleasure in work well done'. 'I cannot describe the pleasure I felt at meeting my old friend again'. It is clear that 'countables' and 'uncountables' cannot hold this Protean word in their grasp! What is needed here is more information about the word 'pleasure' and its implications in various contexts.

An historical introduction to the study of the indefinite article can be effective, provided it is made in comparison with languages such as French or German, where the same word behaves as indefinite article or numerical adjective and the context, not the word, decides its function in any particular case. Students with a knowledge of languages can be told that the word *one*, like the words *un* or *ein*, used to mean both 'a' and 'one', and that the difference (in this respect) between English on the one hand, and French or German on the other, is that the English language has felt the need for a word of weaker implication than *one* to use with a noun referring to a member but not a particular member of any class of substantival concepts.

If such an introduction is given, care must be taken not to insist too much on the link with *one*. It must be pointed out that spoken English is very careful to emphasize by stress the difference between *a* and *one*. *One*, when it is used with a noun as a numerical adjective, is usually stressed. It implies a contrast with or distinction from any other number—'I want one slice of bread and two pieces of cake'. Even in an expression like *one day*—'One day last week I went to a very good concert in the Town Hall'—*one* retains its stress when there is no idea of comparison with other days. This expression would carry two stresses—'*wʌn 'deɪ*. *A*, *an* are weakened forms and are never stressed except in unusual circumstances which need not trouble any but an advanced student.

The drawback to the historical approach is that students who have been taught it sometimes use *one* when they ought to use *a* in conversation, particularly when they are flustered. They will say things like 'May I have one box of matches, please?' which in this situation is wrong. The point regarding presence or absence of stress must be emphasized to them.

Another approach might be made by considering cases where the English omit the article even with 'countable' nouns. A common instance will be found in any museum. The exhibits there are pretty certain to be labelled by an identifying noun without any article—'flint arrow-head', '18th-century snuff-box', etc. The same is often true of the explanatory titles to illustrations in books, particularly technical books—'cross-section of internal combustion engine', 'apparatus for measuring density'. Newspaper headlines are full of examples of such omissions.

These cases are familiar enough to English people in their daily life. They must therefore be taken into account, and they do provide a clear case of omission of the indefinite article in circumstances which,

according to the rule regarding 'countables', should call for its use. Let us take the point a little farther, however. The label referring to the snuff-box in the museum may tell us a little more about the box. It might read: '18th-century snuff-box. An example of Sheffield silverware.' Here the article tends to come in. The inscription on the label was clear enough without an article so long as it merely gave the visitor a clue to the nature of the object described by it. As soon as any selection or discrimination is made, the article will usually be introduced. There are other examples of Sheffield silverware, candlesticks, for instance, or teaspoons. The snuff-box in the museum is only one of them, and it is identified as one of the class by the indefinite article. The definite article would be inadmissible here for the reason already given, that there are other examples of Sheffield silverware. The snuff-box is one of them but not the only one.

The label may go on to give more information about the snuff-box. It may say: '18th-century snuff-box. The example of Sheffield silverware which this box provides is characteristic of the latter half of the century.' Now the word 'example' is identified by a defining relative clause which links it with this particular box, and the definite article is needed to support the identification.

We can study the behaviour of the articles in these examples still further by putting an adjective with the noun 'example'. 'This box is a good example of 18th-century Sheffield silverware. It is a better example of the work of that period than most of the snuff-boxes in this collection.' The indefinite article must still be used. There may be other good examples of 18th-century silverware. Although this one is better than most, the word 'most' in the second sentence suggests that some at any rate of the others are as good as this one, though perhaps not many of them.

If, however, we say: 'It is a better example of Sheffield silverware than any of the other snuff-boxes in this collection', we are expressing an idea which could equally well be conveyed by saying: 'It is the best example in the whole collection.' Here the superlative is used with the definite article, and the reason for using the definite article is clear enough. There is only one best.

Jespersen suggests tests for the identification of the comparative in these cases, which must be supplemented by 'than', whether expressed or implied, and for the superlative, which is or could be followed by 'of' or 'among all'. There seems room here for a rule, which might be formulated in this manner:

'Use the indefinite article with "countable" nouns in the singular when qualified by an adjective in the comparative degree, and the

definite article with such nouns when they are qualified by an adjective in the superlative degree.'

The difficulty about giving such a rule is that it does not account for expressions like 'the greater part of the time' which apparently contradict the 'rule'; but perhaps an English-speaking person, if pressed to justify such a phrase logically (though we must beware of assuming that language is a logical construction), would say that it referred to a stretch of time divided into unequal parts, the greater of which is devoted to some activity or other—'I spent the greater part of the time at the cinema groping under my seat for a glove which I had dropped'. The comparative is used because of the point of conventional English grammar, dinned into every child at school, that when a choice lies between two things only, the comparative form of the adjective must be used. In French it does not matter in certain cases: the form is the same. In English it matters a great deal in 'polite' speech, though in common conversation there is a growing tendency to ignore it.

But if the English speak of 'the greater part of the time', why do they say, 'the best part of an hour'?—'I spent the best part of an hour looking for my glove'. Here again, rules will not help. The diagnosis must be sought through implication once more. It is possible that in this sentence 'the best part of an hour' means 'almost an hour', that it is so great a part of an hour that only a superlative can convey how great it is. In short, the difference between the two types of phrase is a matter of emphasis. As for expressions like 'a best-seller', they are compounds in which the adjective forms a fixed combination with the noun and loses the limiting force normally exercised by the superlative.

Another look at the sentence 'Patience is a virtue' may now be worth while. If a class is told that abstract nouns are used without an article in English, a puzzled frown on the brow of one or the other student may indicate that the wearer of the frown cannot understand why the noun 'virtue' has an article with it. Surely there can be no greater abstraction than virtue. We can indeed count the virtues as they are named to us—patience, honesty, sobriety, etc.—so that the label 'countable' will help here. 'Patience is one of a number of human qualities that we class as virtues', we may tell our pupils, 'and therefore we may refer to it as *a virtue*.' As soon as the proverb 'Virtue is its own reward' comes into the mind, however, the need for more information about the function of the word 'virtue' becomes clear, as in the case already mentioned of the word 'pleasure'.

What is to be inferred from all these cases? They seem to show that the classifications of 'countable' and 'uncountable' do not provide

a completely reliable test for the use and omission of the indefinite article. It is probably safer to say, in Professor Zandvoort's words, that 'the principal function of the indefinite article is to denote that we have to do with a single specimen of the class of persons, animals or things indicated by the noun (often with the implication that any other specimen of the same class would have done as well)'. Even this statement, it will be noted, does not cover 'a virtue', which is neither a person, an animal nor a thing. The 'rule' has to be supplemented by some such explanation as that given in the preceding paragraph, and, indeed, Zandvoort is careful to say 'the principal function' and not merely 'the function' in his definition. It is, however, a good working statement. When we read the label 'snuff-box' or 'flint arrow-head' in the museum we have at the back of our minds '*a* snuff-box', '*an* arrow-head', not '*the* snuff-box', '*the* arrow-head'; but if the labels were to read 'the snuff-box', 'the arrow-head', we should immediately want to ask, 'Which snuff-box?' 'Which arrow-head?' since the definite article, as its name implies, leads us to expect some closer identification than membership of a class.

Mistakes arise over the plural forms corresponding to *a*, *an* in the singular, owing to a habit some foreign speakers have of using 'some' unnecessarily. The writer was asked by a kindly host in a city overseas, whose English was otherwise excellent: 'What would you like for breakfast, some eggs or some fish?' Part of the trouble here lies in the indistinctness of the boundaries between the indefinite and the partitive ideas. A waiter may ask us, 'Will you have porridge?' or 'Will you have some porridge?' What is the difference? Porridge is clearly an uncountable. In the first sentence the waiter is offering us a choice. If he says 'Will you have porridge or stewed fruit?' the choice is obvious. If he merely says, 'Will you have porridge?' a choice is still indicated, though it is probably between porridge as a first course and no first course at all. In either case he is trying to find out our likes and dislikes. The situation is presumably that he is about to order breakfast for us and wishes to be sure that what he orders will be to our taste. Substitute the word 'egg' for the word 'porridge' and the indefinite article will obviously have to be used. We are not in the habit of sharing our breakfast egg.

The waiter may have a healthy respect for our appetite. He may think we need more than one egg. He will then ask: 'Will you have eggs?' Add to the egg its traditional companion on the English breakfast table, and we may be asked: 'Will you have ham and egg?' (not *an* egg) or even 'Will you have ham and eggs?' The last of these questions, to a generation which has largely discarded the heavy

eating habits of earlier times, is perhaps poetic licence, though waiters still use it; but whether the waiter says 'egg' or 'eggs', he uses the word without article or partitive sign, since it has lost its individual significance and has become no more than an ingredient in a dish. 'Ham and egg', like 'best-seller', is a fixed expression with a special connotation. The grocer, on the other hand, would ask a customer, 'Would you like some eggs?' She might reply, 'No, there were some bad eggs in the last dozen that I bought here.'

Now let us sit down at the breakfast table. Suppose we have ordered porridge. The waiter will probably ask: 'Will you have some porridge?' We are not being offered a choice of dishes, but a quantity of the one dish prepared for us, 'some porridge' = 'a plate of porridge'. We may have porridge or go without it. That is all; but the use of the partitive 'some' indicates that we are already likely to know that porridge will be offered us. If he asks, 'Will you have porridge?' at this stage, the suggestion is that he does not yet know whether we want porridge or not. He may ask, 'Will you have tea or coffee?' since both are commonly available at breakfast time without being specially ordered; but if we want another cup of whichever we have chosen, we should probably ask, 'May I have some more tea?' or 'May I have some more coffee?'

Distinctions of this kind are subtle, and in many cases free variants are possible. It is to be doubted whether the ordinary English speaker would distinguish, in the case just quoted, between 'May I have more tea?' and 'May I have some more tea?' It seems likely that the English ear is more offended by the unnecessary use of 'some' than by its omission when it could have been used with propriety.

To labour this point further would be to stray into irrelevancy, but as the omission of 'some' appears to cause difficulty it seemed worth while to allude to it. Reverting to the main theme, we may point out another instance in which a change in the way of speaking seems to call for a change in teaching. In order to draw the distinction between the use of the indefinite and definite articles, teachers sometimes make use of examples of this kind, 'The fox is a sly animal', pointing out quite rightly that 'the fox' denotes a whole class and 'a sly animal' shows attributes possessed by this class though not by this class exclusively. In modern spoken English, however, this type of sentence is not common. A plural without article would be more natural to present-day tastes—'Foxes are sly animals'. This is only a tendency; nobody would attempt to say in the plural that old favourite of the grammar books, 'The lion is the king of beasts'. Certain classifications are still expressed in the singular, for instance, 'The duck-billed

platypus is an egg-laying mammal'; but those examples belong to the scientific textbook. They are rare in speech, and it seems reasonable to suggest that elementary students might be spared the trouble of learning them. A knowledge of them will undoubtedly be necessary for students who wish to read English technical books later; but these students will have no difficulty in understanding them, and are unlikely to need the construction for their own speech. 'Giraffes are herbivorous animals' means exactly the same to an Englishman as 'The giraffe is a herbivorous animal', and it sounds a great deal more natural.

The use of the definite article is perhaps easier to grasp than that of the indefinite article. The definite article does what its name implies. It pins down one particular representative of a class, whether the class be 'countable' or 'uncountable'. In the sentence, 'Cotswold stone is a good building material', there is no article with 'Cotswold stone', since the whole of this substance in general is referred to; but if we say, 'The Cotswold stone used in the building of this village was brought from a quarry thirty miles away', we have isolated a particular portion of the substance from the general mass of that substance, and we must use the definite article. No other way of speaking is possible here. As a rough and ready test of the difference in implication and behaviour of the definite and indefinite articles, we may say that in all common cases a noun which has the definite article with it in the singular keeps the definite article if it is put into the plural. An apparent exception is the sentence, 'The camel is the ship of the desert' whose plural is undoubtedly 'Camels are the ships of the desert'; but it has already been pointed out that the singular construction in this case is both idiomatic, used to speak of a class, and rare. It is unlikely to crop up in the elementary classroom. The definite article clings to its noun and keeps on defining and identifying it throughout all changes of number. The indefinite article, on the other hand, disappears in the plural or, under certain conditions, is replaced in the plural by *some*.

As a conclusion to these remarks, it may be both interesting and helpful to make a detailed examination of an example of contemporary English. This will enable the articles to be studied 'in action', so to speak, in the passage concerned; for this purpose an extract has been chosen at random from a recent copy of *The Times* and is reproduced overleaf: immediately following it are a number of notes commenting on the use (and non-use) of articles in the extract.

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S. AFRICAN FRUIT EXPORT PLAN¹ SHIP REFRIGERATORS² TO BE USED

Cape Town, Jan. 31.

The Minister of Transport³ to-day outlined the emergency plans⁴ to keep fruit exports⁵ moving after the fire⁶ on Wednesday which destroyed the greater part⁷ of the fruit pre-cooling stores⁸ in Cape Town harbour.⁹

The carriage¹⁰ by railway¹¹ of grapes and plums¹² to the harbour¹³ has already been resumed, and the fruit¹⁴ is being loaded direct into the refrigerated holds¹⁵ of the *Clan Macaulay*,¹⁶ which will act as a floating cold store¹⁷ until she is full. The same¹⁸ will be done with other specially chartered fruit ships¹⁹ as they arrive.

Some fruit,²⁰ notably pears,²¹ the minister²² said, would be taken by rail²³ in fast trains²⁴ to Port Elizabeth, where pre-cooling stores²⁵ would, if necessary, work round the clock.²⁶ Some fruit ships²⁷ would be diverted there. With the pre-cooling machinery²⁸ in Cape Town not damaged by the fire,²⁹ and with the new substations³⁰ which were now being built, and emergency repairs³¹ to the damaged sheds,³² it would be possible to handle up to 5,000 tons³³ of fruit³⁴ at a time³⁵ within a few days.³⁶ Other arrangements³⁷ would be announced later.

Notes

1. No article is used with 'plan'. Where no obscurity is possible the article is commonly omitted in headlines.
2. Indefinite article omitted in the plural.
3. The noun *Minister* is identified by the phrase *of Transport* as a particular one of its class, therefore the definite article is used.
4. The implication is that the Minister is known to have prepared these plans and that an announcement of them is expected.
5. No particular fruit exports are referred to here, therefore the definite article would be wrong.
6. The fire is identified. It is the one which happened on Wednesday.
7. This phrase is dealt with on page 110 *supra*.
8. The pre-cooling stores in question are identified as those in a particular place, Cape Town harbour, therefore the definite article is used.
9. No article is needed with the majority of names of towns, and the addition of a word like *harbour* or *station* leaves the construction unchanged.

10. The method of carriage on this particular occasion—by railway—is specified, therefore the definite article is used with 'carriage'. Omission of the article would be equally correct. This is a case where a free variant is possible; but in a sentence like 'Carriage by rail is often quicker than road transport', where carriage in general is referred to, there is no article.

11. The article is omitted in speaking of methods of transport. The vehicle—car, aeroplane, etc.—or system—sea, road, rail, air—is not visualized except as an adjunct of travelling, and needs no article.

12. The grapes and plums referred to here are not identified particularly amongst the whole class of such fruit, therefore no article is needed.

13. The harbour has already been identified as Cape Town harbour, and the definite article is needed here.

14. The fruit is identified by the previous reference to *grapes and plums*.

15. 16. More cases of identification. The holds are those of the *Clan Macaulay*, and *Clan Macaulay* is the name of a particular ship. Pupils may safely be told always to use the definite article with names of ships, unless preceded by the title *H.M.S.* If they ask why the article disappears before *H.M.S.*, the answer is that *H.M.S.* stands for *Her Majesty's Ship*, and that no article follows the possessive. We would say *the S.S. Clan Macaulay* because *S.S.* stands for steamship and the name *Clan Macaulay* identifies the particular ship. We would equally say *the motor-vessel Clan Macaulay*, *the sailing ship Clan Macaulay*, or *the good ship Clan Macaulay*. Less common, but possible in certain contexts, would be *the ship Clan Macaulay*.

17. The noun here is *cold store*, and *floating* is an adjective qualifying it. The *Clan Macaulay* will be acting as one of the whole class of cold stores, therefore the indefinite article must be used here, and the addition of a qualifying adjective makes no difference to the need for it.

18. The noun *thing* is to be understood after the adjective *same* which qualifies and identifies it. Pupils may safely be taught always to use the definite article with *same*. (Jespersen considers *the same* to be an indissoluble word-group, which he calls 'the pronoun of identity' though it is difficult to explain it away as a pronoun in a phrase such as *the same evening*, when it appears rather to fulfil the functions of an adjective by qualifying the noun *evening*).

19. Not all the fruit ships afloat will come to Cape Town to help in this emergency, and *other* is not intended to define those which will come except to distinguish them from the *Clan Macaulay*. *Specially*

chartered provides no further definition, since the Clan Macaulay itself, in the most probable reading of the phrase, belongs to the class of specially chartered fruit ships. There is one other possible reading: the phrase might be considered as an ellipsis for 'other fruit ships, which have been specially chartered'. Even in this case, however, the ships in question are only some of the whole class of ships, and the relative clause, which is a non-defining relative, makes no difference to the omission of the article.

20. If the phrase *some fruit* in this sentence were read aloud, the word *some* would have to be stressed in order to give it the meaning which was in the mind of the journalist who wrote it. It means 'some of the fruit which has to be disposed of by these emergency arrangements'. It would have been equally correct to write *some of the fruit*, since the whole article is about the disposal of fruit to be exported from Cape Town harbour; but *some fruit*, with the correct emphasis of the voice, makes the meaning clear with less words.

21. *Pears* is used very generally to indicate one class of fruit to be shipped. No article is needed.

22. *Minister* can refer only to *Minister of Transport*, the only Minister mentioned in the passage, therefore the definite article is needed. cf. note 3.

23. cf. note 10.

24. Some of the class of fast trains, but not identified any further. No article is needed.

25. Not all the pre-cooling stores in Port Elizabeth will necessarily be called into use, therefore no article.

26. *Round the clock* is a figurative expression, *clock* being the symbol of time. It is equivalent to *all the time*.

27. cf. note 20.

28. Some of the pre-cooling machinery in Cape Town has been damaged, some has escaped. It is this latter machinery which is referred to here. The sentence could be read, if fully expressed, 'The pre-cooling machinery which has not been damaged'. The machinery in question is identified from all other machinery, and the definite article is needed.

29. cf. note 6.

30. In this case, the implication is that the reader is already aware that new sub-stations are being built, and they can therefore be referred to definitely.

31. In contrast to the preceding note, there is no suggestion that the repairs have been previously alluded to. There is no particular identification, and no need for an article.

32. The sheds, however, have been previously mentioned (as the fruit pre-cooling stores). They are identified particularly, and need the definite article.

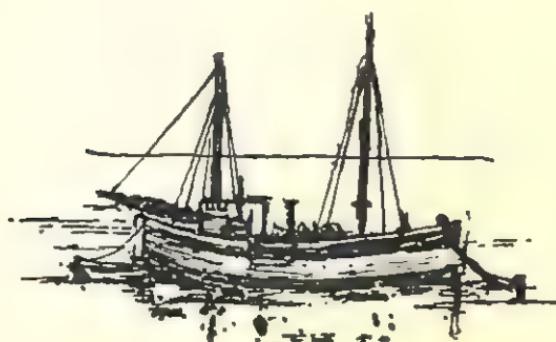
33. The numerical adjective, if a cardinal, needs no article with it unless further definition is needed, as in cases such as 'The six books which I borrowed from the library are all due to be returned on Saturday'.

34. There is no particular definition of the fruit to be handled, which would be the only justification for using the definite article after an expression of quantity.

35. The word *a* in the phrase *at a time* means *one*. The phrase is similar to 4d. *a dozen*, which means *4d. for one dozen*. The phrase *at one and the same time*, which is a more emphatic form of *at the same time, simultaneously*, will make the reason for using *a* clear. The phrase *at the time* has a totally different meaning. It means *at that time*, speaking of some period or point of time in the past, e.g. 'I don't know how the house caught fire. I was away at the time (i.e. at the time when it happened)'.

36. *A few* is the equivalent of *some*. *The few* would narrow down the reference of the noun *days*, and we would expect some qualifying phrase or clause to follow, explaining the narrowing down, e.g. 'in the few days that remain before the date on which the Clan Macaulay must leave for Liverpool'.

37. The arrangements to be announced later may not be the complete list of such arrangements. By not using the definite article the writer avoids any such suggestion, and leaves room for the announcement of still more arrangements should they be needed. Contrast note 4 above, where 'the plans' refers to some specific set of plans already known to have been drawn up.



Initial Clusters

L. A. HILL

1. It is a well-known fact that a student may have no trouble pronouncing a particular list of consonants if he pronounces each by itself, but may have a lot of trouble when he tries to combine two or more of the consonants to pronounce a cluster: for example, he may be able to pronounce *s* in *sip*, *t* in *tip*, and *r* in *rip* with no trouble at all, but he may have considerable difficulty with the cluster *str* in *strip*.

2. Unless a teacher knows what clusters occur in the particular language he is teaching, he cannot give his students systematic practice in pronouncing them. A list of such clusters is therefore useful to him: he can go through it systematically, finding out which of the clusters are difficult for his students, and then he can arrange to give them periodical practice on these. He can also list the clusters in the students' own language and compare them with those in the language they are studying, so that he can predict points of difficulty and determine why they are stumbling-blocks for his students.

3. To do this work properly, the teacher should have separate lists of initial clusters (ones which occur at the beginnings of words), final clusters (ones which occur at the ends of words), and medial clusters (ones which occur in the middles of words, with a vowel immediately preceding and a vowel immediately following). For instance, the cluster /ts/¹ can occur finally in English (e.g. in *cats*), but not initially, whereas in German it can occur both initially (as in *zu*) and finally (as in *Platz*). We would expect English students of German to have trouble with initial /ts/, but not with final /ts/.

4. Lists of clusters exist, but they tend to be drawn up for phoneticians rather than for practising language teachers, so that they do not always help the latter as much as they might: for instance, the final cluster /tlz/ occurs in English (e.g. in *bottles*), but in some lists it is not included, because syllabic /l/ is interpreted as /əl/, so that /tlz/ is replaced by /təlz/. Such an interpretation is perfectly legitimate in a work intended for phoneticians, but a conscientious teacher will

¹ Letters between diagonals / / and letters in square brackets [] in this article show sounds, while *italics* show spellings. Diagonals enclose phonemes, while square brackets enclose allophones (see D. Jones: *The Phoneme: its Nature and Use*, paragraphs 23 and 24: Heffer, Cambridge).

want to know that the pronunciation /bɒtlz/ for *bottles* is considered much better by speakers of Standard English¹ than /bɒtəlz/.

5. Furthermore, some of the best lists are based on American English pronunciation, and do not, therefore, fit British Standard English closely enough, if that is what the teacher is trying to teach.

6. In this article, the initial clusters are dealt with. I hope, in a later article, to deal with final ones. I shall exclude clusters found only in obviously foreign loans (e.g. /ts/ in *czar* and *tsetse*, which is replaced by /z/ by many English speakers; /ʃn/ and /ʃm/ in *Schneider* and *Schmidt*; and /dv/ in *Dvořák*: if one starts admitting foreign clusters, there is no end to it).

7. First I shall give a 'model' from which all the clusters can be 'generated'. This is a substitution table from which one can build up all the initial clusters by following certain instructions. Here is the model:

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C
/s/	(1) /p/ /t/ /k/	(1) /l/ /r/ /w/
	(2) /f/	(2) /j/
	(3) /v/ /m/ /n/	
	(4) /b/ /d/ /g/ /θ/ /ʃ/	(2)
	(5) /h/	/j/

¹ So-called 'Received Pronunciation', or R.P. (see D. Jones: *An Outline of English Phonetics*, paragraph 62: Heffer, Cambridge).

8. The following arrangements are possible (examples of all clusters are given):

A + B (1)
A + B (1) + C EXCEPT /spw/, /stl/, /stw/

spin, stick, skin
splash, spray, spew;

A + B (2) or (3)

A + C EXCEPT /sr/
B (1) or (2) + C EXCEPT /pw/, /tl/, /fw/

stream, stew;
sclerosis¹, screw,

square, skewer
sphere, svelte²,

smash, snow
slow, swing, sue³

play, pray, pure;
true, twenty, tube;

clean, cry, queen,
cube; flow, free, few

view, mute, news
blue, brown, beauti-

ful; draw, dwell,
duty; glass, grow,

Gwen⁴, gules⁵;
three, thwack,

thews; shriek
huge⁶

B (3) + C (2)
B (4) + C EXCEPT /bw/⁷, /dl/, /θl/,
/ʃl/, /ʃw/⁸, /ʃʃl/

B (5) + C (2)

9. The transition from one consonant sound to the next in English clusters is very close: i.e. there is no vowel sound between them: *spin* is /spin/, not /səpin/. This fact causes difficulty to many students of English as a foreign language, who, for example, say /səkru:/ or /səkəru:/ for *screw*, because their own language does not have close clusters of this kind. Such students confuse *sport* and *support*, etc.

¹ /skl/ is a rare initial cluster in English.

² /sv/ is a rare initial cluster in English.

³ Some people do not use the initial cluster /sʃ/ in English: they use /s/ instead (e.g. they say /su:/ for *sue* instead of /sju:/).

⁴ The initial cluster /bw/ occurs in the word *bwana*, but I class this as an unassimilated loan-word, so I do not include /bw/ among English initial clusters.

⁵ The phonetic symbol /ə/ is called *schwa* (pronounced /ʃwa:/) in America, but this word is not generally known in Britain.

⁶ The initial cluster /gw/ occurs in proper nouns (e.g. *Guatemala*) and in the words *guano* and *guava*, both of which could be classed as unassimilated loan-words.

⁷ The initial cluster /gj/ occurs only in the rare words *gewgaw* and *gules*.

⁸ Some speakers use /ʃ/ (the voiceless palatal fricative) instead of the initial cluster /hʃ/ (e.g. /ʃu:dz/ for *huge*, instead of /hju:dz/).

10. Other students have medial clusters of this kind in their own language, but not initial ones, so that, for instance, they say /iskru:/ or /eskru:/ for *screw*. Such students confuse *special* and *especial*, *stray* and *astray*, *steam* and *esteem*, etc.

11. Before teaching clusters, one should make sure that the students can pronounce the consonants of English reasonably well when they are not in clusters.

12. The next step is to find out which clusters they have difficulty with, so that one can know which to concentrate one's efforts on. I find the best way to do this is to get the students to say certain English words, without the teacher saying them or writing them first. For instance, if the teacher wants to test the cluster /θr/, he can hold up three fingers and say, 'How many fingers am I holding up?' If he wants to test /gl/, he can draw a glass on the blackboard and say, 'What's this?' And so on.

13. Once the teacher has found out which clusters his class find difficult, he can work on these, leaving the others aside.

14. Where a particular cluster exists in English, but not in the mother-tongue, it is of course likely to cause trouble, and the students will tend to replace it by something which fits in with the language habits of the mother-tongue. The teacher who can make (or find) a list of the clusters in the students' mother-tongue will be in a good position to understand why students have trouble with certain English clusters when they occur initially, and why they replace them by certain other sequences of sounds. Armed with this knowledge, he will be able to tackle the problem of teaching the English clusters concerned in a systematic way.

15. When a voiced consonant¹ immediately follows a voiceless one, the English speaker makes the transition from one to the other easier by not making the 'voiced' one voiced right from the beginning. For instance, instead of pronouncing *snow* with /s/ followed by a /n/ which is voiced the whole way through, he begins with /s/, then he goes on to a short sound which is rather like breathing audibly through the nose (it is a voiceless kind of /n/), and then he pronounces a real /n/. One can write this in the following way: [s^ηnou], where [η] is a devoiced /n/².

¹ A voiced sound is one pronounced with vibration of the vocal cords. A voiceless one is pronounced without such vibration (see, e.g., P. A. D. MacCarthy: *English Pronunciation*, Chapter V: Heffer, Cambridge).

² A devoiced sound has no vibration of the vocal cords, but it has the weak breath-force that usually accompanies a voiced sound, instead of the stronger breath-force that usually goes with a voiceless sound (see MacCarthy: op. cit., paragraphs 345 and 346).

16. If a student tries to pronounce *snow* with a /n/ which is voiced right through, he is likely to say /sənou/ instead, in his attempt to pronounce a fully voiced /n/ immediately after the /s/. It is therefore useful to teach students to use partly devoiced /l/, /r/, /w/, /v/, /m/ and /n/ when these are the last elements in initial clusters.

17. To teach students how to pronounce a devoiced consonant, get them to pronounce the voiced consonant first, and then to breathe hard through the mouth (or nose, in the case of /m/ and /n/) with the tongue and lips in the same position as for the voiced consonant. For instance, to teach the devoiced [w] in *queen* ([kwy:ən]), get them first to pronounce /w/, and then to keep their tongues and lips in the same position while breathing out rather hard.

18. I find that the best way to overcome difficulties with initial clusters is to get students to practise saying them very slowly, dragging out each sound, except in the case of the plosives (/p/, /t/, /k/, /b/, /d/ and /g/), which cannot be dragged out. For instance, if I want to teach *spin*, I first get the students to say *pin*. Then I get them to make a long /s/, with nothing before or after it. Then I get them to make a long /s/ sound followed by /pin/. While they are pronouncing the /s/, they should concentrate on that, and not think of the following /p/. Gradually, as they go on practising, they should try to make the /s/ shorter and shorter: /ssss pin/, /ssss pin/, /ssspin/, /sspin/, /spin/. As always with pronunciation, little and often is the best motto: a few minutes' practice every day (or several times a day) is better than three-quarters of an hour at a stretch once a fortnight.

19. When the first element of an initial cluster is a plosive (e.g. in /gr-/ and /pl-/), one can get the students to try putting their tongues and lips in the position for the next element in the cluster while they are holding the stop for the plosive, or even before they make the stop. Thus, when they release the plosive, their organs of speech will already be in the position for the next part of the cluster, and an intrusive /ə/ can be avoided. For example, when saying *queen*, they can first put their lips in the position for /w/, then they can make the stop for /k/, while keeping their lips rounded, and then they can release the /k/ by lowering the back of the tongue to the position required for /w/. This, in fact, is what native speakers of English do. (For devoicing, see paragraphs 15 to 17 above.)

20. Similarly, in pronouncing *please*, the students can first close their lips for /p/, then put their tongues in the position for /l/, and then release the /p/ by opening the lips.

21. This sort of practice should be done slowly at first (for instance, the stop for the plosive can be held for quite a time before

being released, and during this time the students can make sure that their organs of speech are in the right position for the next element in the cluster). But ultimately normal speed is the aim: unless a student can pronounce a cluster effortlessly, at normal speed, without having to think about it, he does not 'know' that cluster—or, in other words, he has not got a real command of it. The steps should be: (i) recognition of the new cluster by ear; (ii) conscious practice of the new cluster, at first very slowly; and (iii) practice and over-practice, once the cluster has been consciously mastered, until its correct use becomes unconscious.

22. Finally, a word of warning: before starting work on pronunciation, a teacher should be clear about his aims: does he want the student to be able to speak English with such a good pronunciation that native English speakers will accept him as 'one of themselves'? Or does he want him to speak with a pronunciation that will make him internationally intelligible, but nothing more? Or does he merely want him to be able to pronounce English rapidly after *some* fashion, so that he is not hindered in rapid reading? It is no use spending a lot of time teaching students to pronounce clusters really well if that is not part of the teacher's aims. The degree of proficiency aimed at should fit in with the overall aims.

In the Classroom

No. 8: Dealing with Prose Texts

D. H. SPENCER

'Open your books on page 83. Chapter 7. Smith, will you start reading aloud, please?' . . . 'Thank you, Smith. Jones, please read the next paragraph.' . . . 'That's enough, Jones, thank you. Will you carry on from there, Brown?' I hope that this kind of lesson is dying out, but I don't feel too sure of it. It's very nice for a rather tired teacher, and even nicer for Robinson, at the back of the class, who has either gone to sleep, or else is surreptitiously reading the latest strip-cartoon. But it is not so nice for keen students who are paying

to learn the language and who, from this sort of lesson, will learn almost nothing at all.

Let us consider a few ways of actually teaching instead of just reading. Naturally I am not here concerned with the higher level, in which ordinary language study gives way to consideration of style and treatment. Whether the prose piece is an ordinary textbook passage or part of a set text for examination purposes does not matter; in both cases it will only be a means to the end of learning the language. It is a more or less typical piece of English which is presented to the students for the purpose of showing them what the language looks like, and how the sentences and paragraphs are composed. Certain sentences will undoubtedly illustrate principles which they have already learnt. From a study of it they can be expected not only to widen their vocabulary, but also to revise certain structures and to learn one or two new ones. It will provide them with model patterns to remember and to use themselves. To see a sentence in print, possibly by a well-known author, which follows exactly the same pattern as they were practising in an oral drill only last week helps the students to fix that pattern in their minds. But the sad thing is that unless this resemblance is pointed out and remarked upon by the teacher most of the class will miss it altogether.

Any prose text, whether long or short, should be read first by the students at home. And they should possess a dictionary to help them. At the level I am mainly thinking of, which is intermediate to advanced, or, say, from the Cambridge Lower Certificate in English to the Certificate of Proficiency in English, any reading aloud in class, apart from the occasional sentence or two, is a waste of time. If they cannot read it beforehand, or, which is more likely, the teacher has forgotten to tell them to do so, then they must be given 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the lesson to read it silently. The teacher should then summarize the passage in his own words, pausing towards the end of certain sentences to see if anyone in the class can finish them for him. Usually someone can. If the text is straightforward and the response seems adequate, he can go on to ask a few simple comprehension questions. He can accept short answers, because that is only natural in conversation. But all the questions must admit of quite simple answers because the answers need to come quickly, without painful pauses, in order to keep alive the other students' interest in the text. Now the teacher can ask each student to think of a question himself and allow a little time for that to be done. At the end of that time one student puts his question to a second student, who answers it and puts his own question to a third, and so on. The teacher need not

interrupt except to correct a mistake. If this goes well then he can allow everyone to have a turn; if not, he should cut it short and go on to something else.

Now comes the harder work, and for this the teacher must have made preparations in advance. Suppose that in a fairly recent lesson you had been drilling the pattern: *too + adjective + infinitive*, and in the text you find some such words as these: 'Oh,' she cried, 'you mustn't stop here. It's much too dark.' This is not quite the same, but it will serve. More often than not, of course, you will find the exact equivalent. First of all it is necessary to establish the relationship by asking: 'Why didn't she want to stop?' Someone will say: 'Because it was too dark.' So you go on: 'It was too dark to do what?' 'To stop there.' Now write it in this form on the blackboard:

It was / much / too dark / to stop / there.

Ask for other possible adjectives in place of 'dark', and as they are suggested write them down in the column under 'dark', e.g. wet, rough, stormy, hot, deserted; and then for other possible adverbs in place of 'much' (not, far, really). Someone will probably suggest 'very', and you will have to explain why 'very' won't do. Now get a few students to read, one each, the possible combinations from the blackboard. Then you can ask the students to make up sentences of their own on this model. If they refer to the text under discussion, so much the better, but it would be unfair to insist on that. Experience has taught me that this is the only safe way of asking students to compose their own sentences. If you ask for sentences to illustrate the meaning of a single word, the result, more often than not, is disastrous. I remember once spending several minutes trying to explain the meaning of 'embarrassed' and then saying: 'Now each of you make up a sentence to show the meaning of this word.' The first answer I got was this: 'She was five months embarrassed with a baby'!

Each page of text will contain one or two structures which can be picked out, enlarged upon and drilled in this way. The final step in the exercise can be varied. If, for example, you are illustrating the use of the Simple Past Perfect tense you could write on the blackboard: She went out / as soon as /—and in the column under 'as soon as' put the rest of the temporal conjunctions, and then ask for all these sentences to be completed. The students give their answers aloud, of course, as soon as they are ready. Or, if you like, you can allow them a few seconds to think out and write down their sentences, and then call upon them to read them out. The model from the text stays on the blackboard in front of them all the time.

In a text containing dialogue the teacher can have some of the

dialogue turned into reported speech. Sentences in reported speech or the Passive Voice can similarly be recast so that they are in direct speech or the Active Voice. If there is an extra long sentence it can be broken up into shorter ones; in this case the students will obviously have to make small changes necessary to grammatical accuracy while keeping strictly to the sense. A careful preparatory study of the text by the teacher will reveal the possibility of a number of such exercises, and he can use as many as suit his immediate purpose and as he has time for. Wherever possible it is advisable to relate the exercises to work either done in previous classes or about to be undertaken in future classes. A prose text comprises only a part of the syllabus, and it is as well to treat it as an integral, not an isolated part. A final exercise might be a short dictation from the text including at least one of the structures that has been practised separately.

It will be obvious that the emphasis throughout has been on oral work and on active participation by the class. Lastly there is the question of written work to be done at home. Too much written work consists of essay-writing. This means adding the burden of finding ideas to the already considerable burden of expression, and gives the unhappy teacher the burden of correcting a lot of mistakes. But if one uses a prose text, already fairly extensively dealt with in class, as the basis for written work, the students' burden is reduced. Two or three short exercises, involving only the equivalent of a paragraph each, are better than a single essay exercise. The kind of exercise outlined above is also suitable for written work, and when done twice in this way, orally in class and in writing at home, the impression left on the students' minds is a stronger one. But whatever type of exercise is set for homework the teacher should nearly always, in his own interest as much as in that of the students, give some help with it beforehand.

What form should this help take? I believe the teacher should discuss the question and possible answers to it with his class. Suppose he wants the class to write a description, in 80 to 100 words, of a character in the text. He might draw attention, first of all, to those parts of the text where something is said about the character. Then he might ask leading questions (much better than vague or general questions), e.g. What does the character do for a living? How old is he? Is he tall or short, rich or poor? Adjectives and phrases which seem apt can be written on the blackboard, but not complete sentences. It takes a little time to do this, but it gives the students a clear idea of what is needed, so that when they come to sit down and write out their paragraph they will be in a position to concentrate on

the language rather than on the content. Isn't this spoon-feeding? Well, yes, it is, but it is also sound teaching.

An important principle in language teaching is, it seems to me, to make the work easy enough for the average student in the class to tackle with a good chance of success. No one is going to learn if he feels from the beginning that he is being asked to do something too difficult, or for which he has not been adequately prepared or instructed. A sentence written out correctly the first time not only saves the teacher trouble in correcting it, it also—and this is more important—pleases and encourages the student. At the same time one must be careful not to overdo the spoon-feeding with adults or the result will be boredom and loss of interest. A usually successful exercise which illustrates this idea is to give in the form of a dictation at the end of a lesson the very same ten or twelve comprehension questions which were asked orally at the beginning. Between each question the students leave space for the answers, which they are going to supply at home. Orally they may have given short answers; at home they must give complete ones.

It will be objected, I suspect, that with only one, or at most two, periods a week devoted to the prose text there is not enough time to build up all this work on it. The teacher can only decide for himself how much or how little of any particular activity he is able to get through. But some teachers seem to think more of finishing the set books, by hook or by crook, than of teaching well. Obviously not all prose passages, and not all the chapters of a prescribed book for an external examination, need be dealt with in this way. One can be selective. But this is about the only way to get the maximum teaching value out of them.

Towards a Standard of International English

PAUL CHRISTOPHERSEN

(This article is a slightly modified version of a paper read at the Conventus Romanus Conference held at Rome in October 1959. The writer is Professor of English Philology in the University of Oslo and author of An English Phonetics Course [Longmans, 1956].)

Teachers of English abroad, especially perhaps those to whom English is a foreign tongue, must have asked themselves from time to time in recent years if all is well with the basic aim of their teaching.

All language-learning is essentially imitation, but imitation of what or whom? If native¹ users of English do not all speak or write alike, what is the foreign teacher to do? Which form of English should he adopt as a model for himself and his pupils? There are in fact several variant forms of the language with some claim to serve as a model; hence the difficulty. Traditionally, since the introduction of language-teaching on modern lines at the end of the nineteenth century, 'Received Pronunciation' (R.P.) has been practically the only type of English taught in western European countries, but recently its position has begun to be challenged. R.P. (in the sense of that particular pronunciation and the grammatical and idiomatic usage associated with it) is no longer the only kind of English for which good textbooks are available, and R.P. no longer enjoys the unique prestige that it once did, either in Britain or internationally. Should this be reflected in the teaching of English and if so how? A standard will presumably still be required: is anything gained, then, by throwing one standard overboard and putting another in its place? Before I develop my own views on this matter, I should like to cast a glance at some of the more important discussions of the problem that I have come across.

David Abercrombie, in *Problems and Principles* (Longmans, 1956), put forward the view that, for older pupils whose speech organs have lost their pliability, a 'limited goal' might be aimed at in pronunciation. For instance, he says, it is not important for intelligibility to distinguish between clear and dark /l/, since these sounds are variants of the same phoneme in English, and so there is no need to bother to teach that distinction if it seems likely to cause difficulty. Altogether, Abercrombie questions the assumption that the type of pronunciation that foreigners should use as a model must invariably be R.P. Other types of English pronunciation are equally acceptable and in some cases preferable, and Abercrombie makes a special plea for a 'limited goal', for a 'synthetic' style of speech, adapted from an existing form of English with allowance made for the learner's particular difficulties. Abercrombie confines his attention chiefly to pronunciation, because, if I have understood him aright, he considers that there is already an international standard of written English, although not 'exactly the same' all over the world. Leaving aside this rather curious argument, I find Abercrombie's idea of a 'synthetic'

¹The term 'native' (speaker or writer) is not ideal, since a person's language has nothing to do with his 'birth,' but is a product of environmental factors (not confined to infancy or even childhood) and is subject to conscious control. The term is conventional, however, and it is difficult to suggest a better one.

form of English interesting, and I wonder whether his approach might not be applied to syntax and vocabulary as well as to pronunciation. I shall come back to this point later, after I have mentioned two other recent contributions to the subject.

Norman E. Eliason, in an article entitled 'American English in Europe' (*American Speech*, October 1957), deals with the question of American pronunciation versus R.P. as a standard in the teaching of English on the continent of Europe. He concedes that, for the purpose of teaching English as a foreign language, it is 'convenient if not essential' to adopt some standard of pronunciation, and he thinks that R.P. is probably in the circumstances the best choice. His only quarrel is with the exaggerated veneration in which that type of pronunciation is held in continental schools and with the consequent prejudice against American English.

The question of British versus American English in the schools was taken up again in February 1959 by R. W. Zandvoort in an article (in Dutch) in *Levende Talen* called (in translation) 'Should we, in our teaching of English, take account of American English?' Zandvoort includes vocabulary and syntax as well as pronunciation in his discussion, and he adopts a very liberal point of view: although British English must no doubt continue to form the basis or starting-point of the teaching of English, the pupils should as far as possible be made familiar with, and certainly not warned off, American English; it should be emphasized to them that educated American English is neither better nor worse than its British equivalent.

Zandvoort in one place compares the situation in Dutch schools, where English is concerned, to that of a schoolboy who is required in his Greek class to be able to tell the language of Xenophon from that of Herodotus. It seems to me that this is hardly a fair comparison, for the schoolboy is not, after all, required to be able to use Greek actively as a medium of expression to any appreciable extent. He may be required to do exercises, but he will never be faced with the question, What model am I to use in my own personal Greek, Xenophon or Herodotus? This, it seems to me, is the heart of the matter. In universities throughout the world Shakespeare is taught, and probably Chaucer and *Beowulf* as well, but no teacher of English would dream of advising his students to adopt the kind of English they find in those works as a model in their own use of English. However liberal in his views, a teacher would never countenance constructions like 'the most unkindest cut' or 'the greatest error of all the rest' [=of all], even though Shakespeare used them. Similarly, we must obviously study American English as an academic

subject. If that were the whole issue, there would be nothing to quarrel about; but unfortunately it is not the whole issue—if it is part of it at all. In schools, and outside the English-speaking world in universities as well, English is taught nowadays not just as an academic discipline but as something with a direct and practical application in the students' daily life. Our work as teachers is not, therefore, purely descriptive; it is *prescriptive* as well, and this is where a difficulty seems to arise. Because even if we are able to rid ourselves of all prejudice, we shall nevertheless have to face the question, Can we at one and the same time prescribe several different models? Is this pedagogically sound? And, if not, which model should we prescribe?

The best answer, I think, is that we should only prescribe one type of English, but we need not for that reason *proscribe* other forms of educated English, whether British or American. The question may also be raised whether, in any one country or in any area where interchange between schools is likely to occur frequently, it is advisable to have several alternative standards in the teaching of English. This might give rise to difficulties if a child or a teacher moved from one school to another. Although this sort of difficulty tends to be exaggerated, it is undoubtedly preferable, for practical reasons, that in each country the standard should be generally the same. The choice of that standard, if it is made centrally, will presumably depend on such factors as the country's geographical situation, foreign and commercial policy, cultural history and affiliations, etc. For instance, as Abercrombie points out, the accent of the United States is the obvious one for learners in Central and South America. For learners in western Europe, as Eliason admits, R.P. is probably the best choice, although, with America's influence on the increase and Britain's on the wane, relatively speaking, a time may come when a switch to American English will seem natural.

One rather important consideration which tends to be forgotten in discussing these matters is that there is a limit to the amount of central planning that can in fact be done. A person cannot *teach* effectively any kind of English other than his own, although he may of course *acquaint* his pupils with other forms of the language. This consideration applies certainly to native speakers, but also, I think, to non-native teachers if they are well trained. Consequently, if the majority of teachers in a given area or country have been trained to use R.P., it is no good instructing them suddenly to teach American English instead: they will not be able to do it. To some extent, therefore, these matters have to be left to sort themselves out—which is perhaps from any point of view the wisest policy.

Eliason and Zandvoort's views form, in my opinion, a sensible compromise, which will avoid undesirable discrimination as between different standards. Nevertheless, there is something that worries me about the whole problem and makes me wonder whether we ought not, after all, to think along Abercrombie's lines, in terms of a synthetic model, though possibly for a different reason from his.

Before I go on to develop this point, I should like to make a distinction between the two terms 'foreign language' and 'second language', which I intend to use with somewhat different implications. A foreign language is a language which is not one's own, even though one may have a very good knowledge of it. A second language, on the other hand, is a language which *is* one's own, though not one's first in order of importance nor, usually, the first to be learnt. The term in this sense implies some degree of bilingualism. The difference in practical skill and general command between a foreign and a second language is, in principle, of no consequence; it is even conceivable that in some cases there may be no difference in that respect. The difference lies in the personal attitude and in the use that is made of the language. A foreign language is used for the purpose of absorbing the culture of another nation; a second language is used as an alternative way of expressing the culture of one's own.

I do not know if I have made my point sufficiently clear. It is not my intention, naturally, to say that there is an absolute distinction between a foreign and a second language, and that there are no borderline cases or cases of transition from one group to the other. Up to a point, nevertheless, the distinction holds good, and it is, moreover, a useful one in discussing teaching aims and methods. Where the latter are concerned there is a great gulf fixed between the two categories; the difference between the passive and receptive attitude to a foreign language and the active and creative attitude to a second should be clearly reflected, I think, in the way languages are taught. If a foreign language is taught as a living language, the ultimate aim must of necessity be to turn the pupils into 'little' whatever it may be—Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, etc.—to make them conform, as far as they are able, to the French, English or American pattern. If a language is taught as a second language, the emphasis is—or ought to be—shifted from the foreign to the native background. The language will still be usable, we hope, for the reception of foreign ideas, but it is intended primarily for the expression of native ones.

Theoretically, there is a third attitude to a non-native language:

that of a scientist or technologist who is interested in it merely as an impersonal medium of communication. I think one may legitimately doubt whether the personality can in fact be completely eliminated even from a scientific argument, and, in any case, the impersonal approach is scarcely conceivable without at least some glancing reference to a possible extended use of the language later on in one or the other of the two senses mentioned. For the large majority of learners, therefore, my distinction is valid.

It may be useful to cast a glance at the Middle Ages, which held different and perhaps sounder views on language-learning than those of our own age. Latin was taught in those days as a second language in the sense in which I have used the term. No attempt was made to turn the pupils into little Romans; and yet, despite a great deal of grammar-drill, the language was taught as a living language by what might be called a form of the Direct Method: the pupils, we gather, were made to speak Latin among themselves, with severe penalties if they did not. With the Renaissance and its revival of classical learning Latin became a foreign language, the medium of a foreign culture, and it also in many countries ceased to be a living language. Since the revival of the Direct Method in the late nineteenth century, the 'foreign-language' approach (by which I mean the study of a language as part of a foreign culture) has remained predominant. But the present century has witnessed the passing of the age inaugurated by the Renaissance, and just as in other fields people are more and more turning to the Middle Ages for ideas and inspiration, so one may wonder whether we might not learn something from the Middle Ages about the right approach to language.

The Middle Ages in Europe possessed something of which we today are greatly in need—an international language. Latin, as I have said, was used by mediaeval people as a second, not a foreign, language and consequently in a form or forms that differed at times markedly from classical Latin. At the present day, the language that offers the best prospect of becoming the international medium of our age is English; but if that is to happen we cannot expect the language to remain pure in the sense of conforming closely to one of the existing forms, and this I think applies to the written as well as the spoken language, though mainly to the latter. Nothing could be further from my mind than to advocate or encourage unnecessary separatism in language, but we have to face the fact that a language develops variant forms to express variations in outlook. It would be impossible to express a typical American go-ahead personality in the strictest R.P. On the other hand, there is something which one might call an

R.P. personality, which could not find expression in broad American. And so, if English is to serve the whole of the western world and part of the eastern as well, we must expect a good many variations. Anything else would be unrealistic.

But, it may be asked, does the realization of this fact mean that we should go out of our way to speed up the development of variant forms of English? Would it not be better if we stuck rigidly to one standard and allowed no deviation from it, at least within the school or university precincts? The answer is that, in the first place, if we decide to uphold a uniform standard we come up against the question, R.P. or American English, or, for that matter, Canadian English, Scottish English or Australian English? In the second place, if we do decide to adopt an existing national standard we come up against the problem of acculturation (as the phrase goes nowadays). To learn a language well the pupil must study it as an integral part of the total life of the community who speak that language, and to speak it well he must in a sense become a member of that community himself. But this, in its turn, would defeat the very purpose of a second language, which is to express one's own or one's nation's outlook and not that of another nation.

Some people, I anticipate, will say at this point that I have got myself tied into a sort of logical knot which cannot be resolved by logic alone, but which can easily be cut by the application of a little common sense. After all, only a relatively few students reach such a degree of proficiency that they are likely to feel any kind of conflict between their national outlook and the outlook that goes with the language they are learning or have learnt. But, in the first place, it may be suggested that perhaps more students would have reached a high degree of proficiency if it had not been for this conflict. Secondly, in years to come we may expect a rise both in the numbers and in the proficiency of those studying English, and more of them are likely, therefore, to feel the conflict and to benefit by its removal. And thirdly, the removal of the psychological difficulty is not the only benefit that would follow from the adoption of a synthetic standard; there would be benefits at the elementary level too. I have already reported Abercrombie's view that such a step would make the learning of pronunciation easier.

Let me briefly recapitulate the argument. Any existing language is the medium of a particular culture (in the anthropological sense). English, under variant forms, is the vehicle of at least two cultures. If it is to serve as an international language it would be desirable to detach it in some sort of way from its 'native' backgrounds and turn

it into a vehicle for other forms of civilization, possibly in each case with some adaptation.

The idea that I have here put forward for consideration may appear to many people unpleasing or even repellent. As a matter of fact, I do not myself know whether to believe in it or not, but I am trying to pursue a certain line of thought and see where it leads. What in practice would the adoption of a synthetic standard amount to? To what extent could it be considered a standard at all, and who would do the adopting? Would not such a step lead to a whole series of national forms of English, which is hardly an attractive prospect? Altogether, from mediaeval Latin one gets the impression of a good deal of fluidity and a lack of standard, and is that something to be aimed at?

In the field of pronunciation, the obstacles in the way of introducing a synthetic standard would be considerable but not insurmountable. As I have already pointed out, nobody can teach effectively a kind of English that is not his own, and in the case of a synthetic type there would be the further difficulty that the type as such would not yet exist in practice. There would be no live specimens, or at least no pure ones, that could be held up as models for imitation. Nevertheless, a great deal could undoubtedly be done by means of teaching aids such as mechanical recording, wireless and television. The problem would have to be tackled in each country or vernacular area separately, since difficulties of pronunciation vary according to the pupils' mother tongue. Peter Strevens, in an article on 'Spoken English in the Gold Coast' (*English Language Teaching*, VIII, 3), discusses this problem with reference to Ghana. For reasons to do with national self-respect, R.P. is not a suitable pronunciation for adoption by Ghana. A form of 'Educated Ghana Pronunciation' seems to be the goal to be aimed at, but as yet the number of speakers of such a form of English is extremely small. In reality, therefore, the model used in phonetics classes at the University College of Ghana is R.P., even though in practical work perfection is not expected. In other countries, too, such as those of western Europe, the best procedure would probably be to choose an existing form of English—R.P., for instance—as a point of departure and modify it in accordance with local needs. Recommendations could be issued to teachers concerning details which are not structural and hence need not be insisted on, such as the difference between clear and dark *l*. An important point of principle is that somebody pronouncing English in accordance with such a set of recommendations could not be described as using imperfect R.P., since R.P. would not be his aim.

His language would be perfect 'Italian English' or 'Dutch (or French) English', etc.

As regards vocabulary, phraseology and syntax, we may have to make a distinction between, on the one hand, formal scientific or literary style and, on the other, the colloquial everyday use of the language. A second language is of course less commonly used colloquially than a first; but with the growing intercourse between nations we may expect a colloquial type of English to develop in the various western countries, sometimes no doubt with idioms peculiar to each country. To what extent should we attempt to direct, or arrest, this development? The pupils should certainly be acquainted with the normal colloquial usage of the English-speaking world; but if a new phrase, unknown in Britain and America, were to spring up, should one try to weed it out? Only, it seems to me, if the phrase is liable to be misunderstood. If a Frenchman says 'Good appetite!' the meaning should be perfectly clear, but I admit that a German-English 'Mealtide!' might be a little puzzling.

But who would sit in judgement and decide these matters—or at least make recommendations concerning them, for more than that would hardly be practicable? It seems that a national advisory body on the teaching of English might be required in each country to deal with those parts of usage that may be said to be properly a national concern, namely, pronunciation and colloquial usage. But the greater part of English usage would of course be—or ought to be—an international concern.

It is very important to realize that a literary tradition is essential for the stability of a written language. Good usage cannot be prescribed, or circumscribed, by dictionary and grammar-book alone. The term 'good usage' is normally held to be synonymous with the usage of the best authors. What holds English together as one language, despite local variations, is ultimately the literary tradition—the fact that all over the English-speaking world it is, in part, the same authors that are read. If that were ever to cease to be so, English would be in danger of falling apart. It seems to me, therefore, that to detach English completely from its literary tradition would be fatal. Even as an international language English will have to be studied in part through the English classics—just as in the Middle Ages at least some of the Latin classics continued to be studied. For the rest I would suggest that an international reading-course might consist of good English translations of works which the student would have in any case to read in translation, for instance European classics in languages other than the student's own. The

course might usefully include some so-called 'functional' as well as imaginative writing, for instance something in English about the history of the student's own country or about European history. The important thing is that the background should not be exclusively or even predominantly British or American.

The international character of the background should be reflected in the vocabulary that is used in the course. For instance, special British or American weights and measures can hardly be said to be part of an international vocabulary, nor can anything else that is specifically English or American. The pupils should obviously learn *Ministry for Foreign Affairs* before they learn *Foreign Office* and *State Department*. And they should learn *Ministry of Justice* as the normal term, though neither of the two main English-speaking countries uses it. To learn terms like *mantelpiece* and *pillar-box* in countries where such things are unknown seems ill-advised, and the same applies to distinctions like that between *barrister* and *solicitor*. Instead of having two words, *vicar* and *rector*, with practically the same meaning, it might be better to confine *rector* to its continental meaning, except of course in specifically English contexts. In the part of the course dealing with the student's own country, special English terms may have to be invented for local institutions and concepts.

All this is relatively simple, which is more than can be said of a good many other matters, such as the long row of terms that differ in British and American English and for which it is hard or impossible to suggest a neutral international term: *lift*—*elevator*, *petrol*—*gasoline*, *railway*—*railroad*, etc. Here a choice will clearly have to be made. Similarly with the list of words and phrases with different meanings or connotations in Britain and America: *apartment*, *billion*, *bug*, *dessert*, *first floor*, *hood* (on a car), *politician*, *round trip*, *truck*, etc. Here, too, a decision will have to be made as to which of the two meanings should be taught.

In the field of grammar, details like *pennies* and *pence* would seem to belong to national rather than international English. In the case of double forms like *got* and *gotten* a choice will presumably have to be made. I say 'presumably' because I am not quite sure; nor am I sure that a choice is necessary between the British and American use of the subjunctive and of *shall* and *will*, and on other points where syntax differs or tends to differ. A language can comfortably allow a certain latitude without loss of precision.

Spelling, it seems, would have to be normalized, and there may be something to be said for some of the American simplifications.

To settle these and a great many other points, or at least to advise on them, it seems to me that some international body would be needed. Otherwise, I fear, confusion would be worse confounded. Some years ago Sir Ifor Evans, in an article on 'English as an International Language' (*Britain To-day*, January 1945), suggested the setting up of an International Institute which should in some way supervise the international use of English and should also, as far as I can see, publish an International Dictionary of English. Sir Ifor was thinking of the growing use of English as an international medium and of the consequent need for greater precision, and he thought the English and the Americans 'would do well to study the methods which the French have employed to preserve and cherish their language'.

Sir Ifor Evans did not use the word 'Academy', no doubt wisely; for although it seems that his proposed Institute would perform some of the functions of an Academy, the idea of a body charged with the task of regulating usage is not one that the Anglo-Saxon nations take kindly to. The idea of an English Academy was shelved in the eighteenth century and has not been seriously raised since. But without some sort of regulating body, the project of an international type of English is hardly workable, and there is of course no reason why the proposed Institute should not be set up if necessary without the support of the Anglo-Saxon nations.

If an International Institute is set up, it might suitably publish other works besides the Dictionary, for example an International English Grammar and an International Handbook of English Composition. These works would be unashamedly prescriptive, in the sense that they would recommend certain usages in preference to others. There has been a great deal of confused thinking about descriptive and prescriptive grammar, and there is a tendency to shrink in horror from the very notion of laying down rules. But rules are very often necessary in this as in other spheres of human activity, and to talk of their being unscientific is largely meaningless.

The proposed grammar would aim at becoming a sort of Priscian of our modern age, and no doubt Priscian's head would from time to time be broken, though we hope not too often. Just as the Middle Ages had their dog-Latin, so no doubt the present age will sometimes produce dog-English, if it has not already done so. Another danger is that international English may develop into an impersonal turgid officialese. It seems somehow easier for foreigners to learn to write English of this kind rather than of a simpler, more direct kind, which makes greater demands upon their knowledge of idiomatic

English. That foreigners are not the only offenders in this respect has been made clear by Sir Ernest Gowers and George Orwell, and there seems in fact no reason why international English should be in any way inferior to national English in aesthetic appeal.

Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and cordially invite correspondence, though we can give no guarantee of publication. When you write to us, please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

L. A. Hill writes from India: *In English Language Teaching*, XIV, 1, B. Lott declares in his article on graded and restricted vocabularies (p. 4, para. 1): 'It is probably true to say that if the structures become more complicated when the vocabulary of an extract is simplified, then the language of the extract will invariably appear artificial.' I would like this to be true. But is it? What proof is there?

In the same issue (pp. 26-32) R. A. Close refers to 'word-magic'. But surely this is nothing but the associations which have formed around certain words and sound-sequences as a result of hearing and using the language. Foreign learners first have to *build up* such associations, before they can enjoy games like The Parson's Cat. They won't learn what Close calls the native speaker's 'feel' for words from such games.

I disagree with the reviewer of *The New Oxford English Course* (pp. 46-47), who doubts the necessity of Teachers' Notes. In my view even a well-trained teacher of English needs detailed guidance; and if no teachers of English but the well-trained were to teach, in some countries very little English teaching would be carried on.

[B. Lott replies from Indonesia: I put forward this generalization (as a probability) principally on the evidence of the workings of Basic English, as suggested at the beginning of the paragraph from which your correspondent quotes. Basic reduces the lexicon of English to a few hundred words; but, because large semantic areas need to be covered, each word has much more work to do than normally. And it is this which involves it in structural involutions which often appear artificial. I was interested to see, a day or two ago, that Samekto, a recent M.A. graduate of Exeter University, arrived quite independently at the same conclusion in his thesis *The Teaching of English in Indonesia (Some Problems and Suggestions for their Solution)*, December, 1959. Mr. Samekto quotes a sentence at random from *Basic Step by Step*, and accounts for its artificiality in just the way I have suggested in the article. The sentence is: *If she gets cheese, he (the man) puts it in paper and makes a parcel with cord, but sometimes the cord gets broken, and the cheese gets to the road.*

An 'unsimplified' version might run: *If she buys cheese, he (the man) wraps and ties it up, but sometimes the string breaks, and the cheese falls out.*

The second version is simpler in structure, since it employs only the pattern subject + verb + collocative preposition (sometimes) + direct object (sometimes); the first version has to use double predicates with prepositions governing nouns which form part of the predicate, as follows:

puts it in paper and makes a parcel with cord

wraps and ties it up

gets broken

breaks

gets to the road

falls out]

[R. A. Close replies from Greece: As a learner of foreign languages myself, I find I enjoy hearing and repeating certain foreign words without possessing the wealth of association they may bring to native speakers of that language. Some such words, pedagogically unessential, ring an intriguing bell. They have the power, however one may explain it, of compelling my attention to the language as a whole. That is a personal experience, but one that many learners of a foreign language, including children, undergo.

Undoubtedly, students of a foreign language have too often been led, and are still, alas, being led, into a maze of words which bear no relation at all to their own lives. They should be taught an essential basic vocabulary, adapted to their particular needs; and the temptation to bring in extraneous matter which would be meaningless to them should, as a rule, be resisted. But we are in danger of taking that doctrine to the extreme, and the result for many learners (who are not nearly as interested in pedagogical systems as their teachers) is often a deadly dullness. I therefore maintain that while instilling a basic vocabulary suitable to the students' actual requirements, the teacher need not always exclude an unusual word if it is harmless, if students enjoy hearing and repeating it for its own sake, and above all if it succeeds in getting people to learn the language and like it.]

Question Box

Answers by F. T. WOOD and P. A. D. MACCARTHY

We shall do our best to deal with the ever-increasing number of questions which our readers send in, but we cannot promise to answer them all.

QUESTION. We speak of the last line of a page, and the last but one, but what must we say for the others, reading or counting from the foot of the page? I feel sure we cannot say 'the last but two', 'the last but three', etc.

ANSWER. We might perhaps say 'the last but two', but we should not go any further than this. The normal expression is 'the second line from the bottom', 'the third line from the bottom', etc.

QUESTION. What is the meaning of 'He said that he was ill'? Does it imply that he is still ill, or is the reference to something that is past, with the implication that the speaker is now in good health again?

ANSWER. It depends on the context. If we say, 'I asked him why he was not at work: he said that he was ill', it means that he was ill then, at the time of speaking. But if we say 'I asked him why he was not at work last Friday: he said that he was ill', it means that he was ill last Friday, with the probable implication (though not necessarily so) that now he has recovered. In the first sentence *was* is used because it is past from *my* point of view; it indicates what the situation was at the time to which I am referring, but of course it gives no indication of what it may be now, when I am speaking (perhaps several days, or even several weeks, later). In the second sentence *was* is used because it refers to something that was past from *his* point of view when the original conversation took place. If we wish to indicate that he was no longer ill we must use *had been*: 'He said that he had been ill, and he was afraid that the cold weather might cause him to have a relapse.'

QUESTION. What is the meaning of *ringer* in the title of Edgar Wallace's well-known thriller *The Ringer*?

ANSWER. It is a slang term for a criminal who constantly changes his disguise to elude detection (see Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*). It was no doubt suggested by the idea of ringing the changes on a peal of bells.

QUESTION. Some time ago I read in the *News Chronicle* an article about Theodor Heuss. It began, 'Professor Theodor Heuss has quietly left the office of President of the German Federal Republic which he has occupied with quiet dignity for ten eventful years'. Why the perfect forms *has left* and *has occupied*, and not the past tenses?

ANSWER. *Has left* is perfectly correct and idiomatic. The article was presumably written immediately, or shortly, after the event referred to, and the perfect tense would therefore be the natural one to use, since no specific time in the past is mentioned. Had the writer inserted *yesterday*, or *last week*, the past tense, and not the perfect, would, of course, have been necessary. (cf. *My father has died* and *My father died yesterday*.) With *has occupied* the position is rather different, first because the period of ten years mentioned in conjunction with it is obviously a period that belongs to the past, and does not extend to the present, and secondly because Professor Heuss no longer occupies the office of President. We should therefore expect the past tense (*occupied*). The explanation is, I think, that the writer of the article thinks of himself as someone paying a tribute to a person on his retirement from an office or position, and such tributes are often paid just as the person is relinquishing the office, when the perfect tense is the only correct one to use. For instance, the manager of a business, making a presentation to an employee on the day of his retirement, will say 'Mr Smith has been with the firm for twenty years'. So used had he got to thinking of Mr Smith as being an employee, that he might even say it if the presentation were made the day after his retirement, and the same psychological 'carry-over' probably accounts for the *News Chronicle* writer's use of *has occupied*.

QUESTION. Is there any difference between plus-fours and knickerbockers?

ANSWER. As you are probably aware, knickerbockers are no longer worn, and the word itself is not used in present-day English except to describe the nineteenth-century garments of that name (of American origin). The abbreviated form 'knickers' is, of course, still in use, but it has a different meaning. Up to a few years ago it was often applied to the short 'half-trousers' (not gathered in at the knee, as the original knickerbockers were) worn by boys before they were old enough to go into long trousers, though now there are other names for those. Plus-fours were an English fashion in the twenties and early thirties of the present century. They were 'fuller' at the knee than the older knickerbockers, and more 'straight' in the upper part of the leg, and were worn for golf or for walking in the country, attending sporting events, etc. They were never everyday or business dress, and were exclusively a middle-and upper-class fashion. They were not worn by working-class people.

QUESTION. Could you please explain the different uses of *who*, *which* and *that* as relative pronouns? Textbooks of English grammar produced in Israel give eight or nine special rules for *that*, as, for instance, that it should be used after superlatives, after ordinal numbers, when persons and things are mentioned together (since it stands for both *who* and *which*), after words like *all*, *nothing*, etc., but none of them seems to cover what is to me the most familiar example of all—'This is the house that Jack built'. No wonder many pupils curse what always seems to me a humble but useful word.

ANSWER. This is far too big a question to be answered adequately here, but there is an article on it in *E.L.T.*, VII, 1, p. 8, to which you might refer. Briefly, the essential points are these:

(i) *That* can never be used to introduce a non-defining or a non-restrictive clause, and can never be preceded by a preposition. There are a few exceptions to the first of these rules, but for all practical teaching purposes they may be disregarded, and the rule made absolute.

(ii) In restrictive clauses *that* is generally used if the clause specifies some essential and material characteristic, so that clause and antecedent are in effect one (e.g. *the dog that bit me*), whereas *which* is used for clauses which are merely added for purposes of identification (*the house which we have just passed*) or which merely give an additional fact (*the elections which are to be held next year*).

(iii) *That* is preferred (a) when the antecedent is *it*, *all*, *anything*, *something*, *somebody*, and similar vague words that need making specific, (b) when it is a numeral or is qualified by a numeral, (c) when it is a superlative, or (d) when the main clause is introduced by an interrogative *who*, *which* or *what*: *Who was it that discovered X-rays?*, *Which is the house that was damaged?* (The reason here is probably one of euphony: a second *who* or *which* would 'clash').

(iv) *That* is used when the clause specifies a particular way in which we are to think of the thing or the person(s) in question: *the sun that ripens the crops*, *the food that nourishes us*, *the air that we breathe*. (The food which nourishes us would suggest a particular kind of food, as contrasted with some other food that does not nourish us.)

(v) *Which* is preferred to *that* when the clause does not qualify the noun that comes immediately before it: *the Bill on lotteries which the Government is sponsoring*. To use *that* might suggest that the Government was sponsoring the lotteries.

The fact that *that* cannot be used for non-restrictive clauses, but *which* can, suggests that *that* binds its clause rather closely to the antecedent, whereas *which* tends to detach it, and it is basically this fact that underlies the uses of the two words in clauses of the restrictive type.

QUESTION. Am I right in using the preterite tense in the subordinate clause introduced by 'the first time' in the following sentence? 'We did not expect her to get through her School Certificate the first time she *sat* for it.' Would it be possible to use any other tense, as, for example, *the first time she would sit for it*, or *the first time she should sit for it*?

ANSWER. The preterite is the only correct tense in such a sentence; your other two suggestions would never be used. In the present we should say, 'We do not expect her to get through her School Certificate the first time she sits for it', just as we should say, 'I will give him your message the next time I see him'. When these are put into the past each of the present tenses becomes a preterite. Similar sentences are, *He was confident he would pass his driving test the first time he took it*. *She promised to visit us the next time she came to London*.

QUESTION. Can *whose* be used for inanimate objects? In other words, must I say 'the table the legs of which are painted', or is it possible to say 'the table whose legs are painted'?

ANSWER. It is certainly possible to use *whose* of inanimate things, but care is needed. I do not think any English person would say 'the table whose legs were painted', though he might well speak of 'houses whose newly painted exteriors and neat front gardens suggest that their owners are comfortable, middle-class people', or 'a pond whose surface was unruffled by the slightest ripple'. It is very difficult to lay down any rule, but the question has already been discussed in *E.L.T.*, XIII, 3, p. 117, and you might find it helpful to refer to this.

QUESTION. Why do we have the spelling *four*, *fourth*, *fourteen*, but *forty* (without the *u*)?

ANSWER. All that can be said is that it has come to be spelt in that way. In Middle English it is found spelt with *-ou*. The change of spelling may reflect a slight difference in pronunciation from *four* and *fourteen* in older English, or it may be purely arbitrary. It is not possible to say for certain.

QUESTION. In an article in *The Reader's Digest* I came across this phrase: 'my high-frequency voice communications radio.' Shouldn't it be 'my high-frequency voice communication radio' (without the *s*), since all the words preceding *radio* constitute a kind of long compound adjective?

ANSWER. It probably would be better to omit the *s*; but it would be better still to avoid the construction altogether, for it is a most cumbersome and ugly combination of words.

QUESTION. I was surprised to read the answer to the last question but one in the Question Box of *E.L.T.*, XIV, 1. It seems to me that there are plenty of examples of *must* used as a preterite in English literature. Here is one example, from Conan Doyle's *The Gloria Scott*, and it does not suggest perversity. 'He *must* have misread it. If so it *must* have been one of those ingenious codes which mean one thing while they seem to mean another. I *must* see this letter. If there were a hidden meaning in it, I was confident that I would pluck it forth.'

ANSWER. I do not think that any of the examples of *must* here is really a preterite. They are all presents, used by a person who is looking back at a situation in the past, experiencing it again, and so, as the C.O.D. puts it, 'reporting a reflection made at the time'. Normally, even when followed by a perfect infinitive, *must* represents a present assessment of what happened in the past. Thus when the thoughts reported above originally passed through the speaker's mind he was using *must* as a present tense; now he is recalling those thoughts. Nor do I think that any of the clauses in question are strictly main clauses. It is true, they have the grammatical form of main clauses, but to the extent that they are reflections, notionally they are akin to dependent clauses used as objects, such as we might get in sentences beginning *I told myself that*, or *I reflected that*.

QUESTION. In grammar books I always find a note stating that 'in headings and book titles substantives, adjectives, and numerals are written with a capital letter'. Is this a general rule, or does it apply only to printing?

ANSWER. It applies to all titles, whether printed or written. Usually adverbs are written with a capital as well, and sometimes verbs, though not usually short verbs like *is* and *are*. Treble and Vallins's *A.B.C. of English Usage* gives as an example *It is Never too Late to Mend*.

QUESTION. Which is it better to say: (a) *a new pair of scissors* (or *pyjamas*) or *a pair of new scissors* (or *pyjamas*); (b) *a good piece of advice* or *a piece of good advice*?

ANSWER. We should usually say *a new pair of scissors* and *a new pair of pyjamas*, but in certain circumstances, if we particularly wanted to stress the idea of *new*, we might place it after *of*. Thus a person normally speaks of buying *a new pair of pyjamas*, *a new pair of shoes*, etc., but he might well say '*I shan't send my clothes to that laundry again; they have ruined a pair of new pyjamas*'. As for part (b) of your question, it depends on the precise idea one wishes to express. We tend to think of *good advice* as a compound noun expressing a single idea, i.e. advice of a salutary nature. So we should say '*I have been giving him a piece of good advice*', meaning '*I have been advising him for his own good*'. But if we wish to say that a particular piece of advice is something of which we approve, or think highly, then we should remark, '*That was a good piece of advice you gave him*'. And similarly '*I want you to give me a piece of good advice*' (i.e. a piece of advice that will benefit me), but '*That was a good piece of advice you gave me*'—which is really a compliment to the adviser rather than a description of the advice.

QUESTION. I know that the suffix *-er* is commonly added to a verb to indicate someone who does the action that the verb indicates, but how does one account for the suffixes *-ar* (as in *beggar* and *liar*) and *-or* (as in *bettor*), used for the same purpose?

ANSWER. Many of the words now spelt with *-ar*, at one time had *-er*. It was changed to *-ar* by analogy with words like *scholar*. The verb *to bet* usually has the agent noun *better* (not *-or*). The *-or* suffix in most agent nouns that are so spelt comes either from Latin or from the French *-eur*, and it was then extended, by analogy, to one or two others that are not of French or Latin origin, e.g. *sailor* by analogy with *tailor*.

QUESTION. What is the difference of meaning between the conditional clauses in the following sentences? (a) 'If he came we could explain the matter to him';

(b) 'If he would come we could explain the matter to him'; (c) 'If he should come we could explain the matter to him'.

ANSWER. Assuming the reference is to the future, as it appears to be from your examples, *if he came* puts an imaginary case or a supposition; the speaker is stating what they could do if a certain condition or certain circumstances are assumed. It might be used in a discussion as to whether a person should or should not be asked to come. *If he would come* means 'if he were willing to come'. This, again, may be an imaginary or an assumed condition, or it may imply that he will not come, but whichever it is it brings in an element of volition on the part of the person referred to, which is not present in the previous construction. *If he should come* is an ordinary open condition, which implies that there is a possibility of his coming, though a rather more remote possibility than would be suggested by the simple present tense *if he comes*. Normally, however, it would be followed by a future tense (*If he should come we shall be very pleased to see him / he will receive a hearty welcome*), or in the case of the anomalous verbs *can* and *may*, which have no future forms, by the present, and *can* might be preferable here, though *could* is not impossible, since it is sometimes used as a rather weaker or more non-committal substitute for *can*, as *might* is for *may*.

QUESTION. Could you kindly comment on the following passages, which rather puzzle me? (i) 'Madame Tussaud has got King George's coronation robes: is there any man alive who would kiss the hem of that trumpery? *He sleeps since thirty years.*' (ii) '*He is dead but thirty years*, and one asks how a great society could have tolerated him.' Both come from Thackeray's *The Four Georges* (Everyman Edition, 1949, pp. 387 and 399 respectively).

ANSWER. The first is not normal English; it is a gallicism, a peculiarity of style to which Thackeray was rather addicted. The normal English construction would be 'he has been sleeping for thirty years'—or better still, 'he has been dead thirty years'. The second may also be due to French influence, but it is possible to defend it on the ground that *dead but thirty years* is to be regarded as a compound adjective denoting the present position. In the same way we might say of a film star 'While he was alive he was the idol of the public; he is dead but three years, and everyone forgets about him'.

QUESTION. Is there any rule regarding the use of the indefinite article before initials? Should one write *a M.P.* or *an M.P.?*

ANSWER. There is no generally recognized rule. The Oxford University Press (*Rules for Compositors and Readers*) insists that its compositors should always print *a* if the first letter is a consonant symbol (e.g. *a L.C.C. school*), but this is not universally accepted. The best principle to adopt would be to use *a* or *an* according to whether, if the sentence were read aloud, we should pronounce merely the names of the individual letters, or substitute the words for which they stand. Thus we should write *an M.P.*, *an L.C.C. school*, but *a U.S.A. cruiser*, because in all these cases we should pronounce the names of the letters; and it must always be *an H.M.I.*, for we could not possibly say 'a Her Majesty's Inspector'. On the other hand it is always *a MS.*, since the abbreviation *MS.* is pronounced as the full word *manuscript*; and most people would probably write *a N.C.B. spokesman*, since for *N.C.B.* we should pronounce *National Coal Board*. Where the initials have been put together to make a word, the same rule must be followed as for other English words: *a Unesco official*, *a NATO decision*.

QUESTION. How do you pronounce the following telephone numbers: 0745, 7400, 7007, 7000?

ANSWER. Recommended are: 'ou 'sevən 'fo: 'faɪf; 'sevən 'fo: 'dʌb|ou; 'sevən 'ou/ 'Pou 'sevən (less likely 'sevən 'dʌb|ou 'sevən, because of the preference for dividing four-figure numbers into groups of two); 'sevənou 'dʌb|ou (or quite likely also 'sevən 'θauznd). The reason is thought to be the risk of having *nought* 'nɔ:t confused with 4 'fo:, the vowel sound being the same. For the same reason the numerals 5 'faɪv and 9 'nain, having the same vowel sound, are by many speakers pronounced on the telephone 'faɪf—with a very short vowel—and 'nainə. (Compare the German use of 'tsvo: for 2 'tsvai, because of the existence of 3 'drai). Clarity is all-important on the telephone (which doesn't reproduce consonants well), hence the carefully articulated 'sevən for the more natural 'sevn, which, if not made very obviously two syllables, might be heard as *ten* 'ten. This word could not of course occur in a telephone *number* (where 10 would be 'wan 'ou), but it could occur in a telephone conversation when giving, for instance, the time of a train, e.g. 'the 7.45' ðə 'sevən, fo:tɪ 'faɪv (which must not be heard as *ten forty-five*).

Reviews

LONGMANS SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH SERIES.

W. M. Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*. Herman Melville: *Moby Dick*. John Wyndham: *The Kraken Wakes. Outstanding Short Stories* (abridged and simplified by G. C. Thornley). *Longmans*. Respectively, 149 pp. 2s. 10d.; 96 pp. 2s. 6d.; 127 pp. 2s. 10d.; 116 pp. 2s. 6d.

Since the end of the war almost fifty volumes have been published in this well-tried series of simplified readers. It may be helpful to the younger teacher of English as a foreign language if we begin this review of some recent additions with a few words on the series as a whole.

The General Editor, Mr C. Kingsley Williams, states the philosophy behind the series in his Introduction: 'It is possible to "translate" any story of action in a vocabulary of less than two thousand words into language which is genuine, idiomatic English and which retains some of the individual charm of the original.' In choosing his titles he has aimed fairly directly at the young adolescent foreign learner and has kept almost exclusively to fiction. The great majority of the books are adventure-stories of one kind or another, and most are classics (or minor classics) of the nineteenth or early twentieth century. The texts are described as 'abridged and simplified'. The length is generally between 30,000 and 40,000 words. This means a good deal of abridgement, but in most cases it is so skilfully done that the narrative does not greatly suffer. The 'simplification' is largely of vocabulary: it does not seem to be done in a doctrinaire spirit, or with a specific word-frequency list in mind. Where less common words have to be retained, they are often explained in a footnote. Though many of the subtler points of the original writing are inevitably lost, it is surprising how much, for example, of Thackeray's *se* remains. By and large, therefore, the series is maintaining the sensible

standards which its general editor had in mind at the beginning, and it now provides, within its somewhat limited range, a large number of titles likely to persuade the foreign learner that English can be read for pleasure at a fairly early stage of the learning process.

One minor criticism must be made. There does not seem to be a consistent policy in the matter of 'questions'. At the back of some of the volumes are lists of questions presumably designed to test comprehension or to provide an opportunity for using some of the language that has recently been read. The questions are usually of the simplest kind: 'How is . . . ?', 'What is . . . ?', 'Why are . . . ?', and they are generally related to the subject matter of a particular chapter only. It would be interesting to know if the publisher has done any consumer research on this matter. Do teachers often make their pupils answer these questions? If so, what effect does it have on the pupil's attitude to his reading? The fact that many of the books do not have these questions may indicate that the publishers themselves are not wholly convinced of their value and are wondering whether it might not be better to leave the devising of such test questions to the teacher if he considers them necessary.

Of the four additions listed above, two are so well known that it is only necessary to say that the adaptations have been competently done—which could not have been too easy either for *Vanity Fair* or for *Moby Dick*. The *Outstanding Short Stories* have been well-chosen with one exception: the authors include Katherine Mansfield, Somerset Maugham and Oscar Wilde, and the stories will be of greater interest to adult readers than are many of the books in the series. The exception is a very short humorous story by Edgar Allan Poe, who would surely have been better represented by one of his tales of mystery. *The Kraken Wakes* is a first-rate scientific thriller, very modern, the sort of thing that is devoured by twelve-year-olds (and can be read with enjoyment by unsophisticated adults). From the teacher's point of view, it is more suited to home reading than to detailed class-study; most youngsters will want to read it through at a sitting. This book, and a good part of *Outstanding Short Stories* begin to satisfy a need to which attention was drawn in volume XI, 3, of *E.L.T.* for up-to-date material with a modern setting. It is to be hoped that more such will follow.

THE HERITAGE OF LITERATURE SERIES. Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations*. C. Brontë: *Jane Eyre*. Mrs Gaskell: *Cranford*. Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*. Joseph Conrad: *The Secret Agent*. Longmans. Respectively, xviii+580 pp. 6s. 6d.; xxxiii+603 pp. 6s. 6d.; xxi+234 pp. 4s. 3d.; xxvii+417 pp. 6s.; xxviii+324 pp. 6s. 6d.

The Heritage of Literature Series is now well established as one of the most useful series of English classics edited for school use. In the first place, it was intended for use in secondary schools in Britain, and editorial policy was to provide an unabridged text (with author's prefaces where they exist), plus an introduction, notes and appropriate exercises. This pattern is still maintained, though the publishers now have in mind, in addition, the differing needs of the overseas student.

Listed above are five recent additions to the series. An examination of the editorial material shows a remarkable uniformity of treatment. In the Introduction, six or seven pages on the author's life and background (though Dickens gets

thirteen!) are followed by an account of the book itself, half summarizing, half critical, running to seven or eight pages or more if it includes an account of the characters. More often than not, however, an analysis of the characters is provided as a separate section of the introduction. This is undoubtedly very useful to the student who is reading the book as a set text for an examination at about the level of G.C.E. (O) or Overseas School Certificate, although one cannot help feeling it would be more valuable (and better-remembered) if the student were encouraged to write his own account of the characters by referring back to the text. In the main, however, the introductions are sensible, knowledgeable, and helpful.

At the end of the book come about twenty-five pages of textual notes and a set of exercises. The notes are intended to serve the needs of overseas students as well as those of British-born users of the books. They therefore include explanations of British customs, etc., notes on places mentioned and on proverbial or idiomatic phrases which would puzzle the overseas reader, as well as the historical and background information which it is usual to supply for home consumption. The exercises, of which there are either twenty or twenty-five, vary considerably in difficulty and usefulness. Some are pure comprehension-tests, others are examination-type questions: some ask for a critical approach, others give opportunities for creative writing. Most teachers will find something of what they want.

No comment is required on the choice of books, other than to welcome *The Secret Agent* to the series. Though first published in 1907, it is modern enough in its background and adult enough in its approach to appeal to modern young people for whom the great English novels of the nineteenth century may not, for the moment, be very exciting reading. It is a pity that copyright difficulties prevent the inclusion of more recent works of this kind.

INTRODUCTION TO PHONETICS. C. M. Wise. 244 pp., index.

Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. and London. 1958. \$4.95 (London, £2 5s.)

Readers who speak and teach British forms of English are unlikely to find much practical value in this book. It is intended for use in American college and university departments of speech, which have practically no counterpart in British educational institutions. The author is almost exclusively concerned with American forms of English.

A British-trained teacher would probably expect a book entitled *Introduction to Phonetics* to be concerned with general phonetics and with the basic facts, techniques, and approach of phonetic study. After reading the book the reviewer is inclined to suggest a new title: 'The Phonetics of American English', for that is what it deals with.

A good deal of space is given to refuting points in the Trager & Smith phonemic description of English. Since this description has gained almost no acceptance in Britain the argument loses its force for British readers.

In general the book is well produced, although the figures are surprisingly unattractive and footnotes are so numerous as to become distracting.

Perhaps the nature of the book may be summed up by saying that it is very roughly an American equivalent of Daniel Jones's *Outline of English Phonetics*, dealing with American forms where Jones describes British ones.

ENGLISH FOR TODAY. J. I. Scobie and W. O. Williams. pp. 160.
Allen & Unwin. 1960. 7s. 6d.

This book aims at training students to write English well. The level of achievement is graded from the Cambridge Lower Certificate to Cambridge Proficiency. It is frankly stated that it sets out to produce what is required by 'examiner and employer'.

The essay, précis, letter-writing (a very good section), the short report, comprehension, and appreciation exercises are covered. The emphasis is on concrete examples and a generous proportion of space is devoted to exercises. It is obvious that the authors are experienced teachers and examiners, well aware of the common difficulties that beset foreign learners.

It is a pity that the book bears signs of having been hastily compiled. It contains contradictions, *non sequiturs*, and actual mistakes which the authors will doubtless correct in future editions. For example, some exercises contain difficulties which the previous section gives no help in solving. This is because 128 pages of text (excluding specimen papers) are not enough for a complete revision of English grammar and usage as well as for extensive advice (excellent in itself) on points like the arrangement of ideas in an essay.

Examples of slips: page 50: example meaningless without its context: "'I open the door' should be 'I opened the door'"—why should it?; p. 57: 'participial' for 'participial' and 'sentence' for 'clause' (Ex. 30); p. 58: 'I thought I should see Mr J. but *he* not there I made myself comfortable'; p. 72, para. 4: Word Order—'The reader is neither interested in the personality of the writer, *nor* in his views on the subject' should read 'interested *neither*'; p. 81: a grammatical mistake (castigated on p. 57)—'While shopping your bag has been snatched.'

In contrast to these mistakes there are sentences offered for 'correction' which are not wrong. The only possible improvements which could be made are too subtle to be expected from students likely to use this book. For example, p. 36: 'I'm afraid I can't give you much news' (I fear?); p. 62: 'This was the restaurant we all would have visited had the weather not been so bad.'

These are matters of detail. A more fundamental question is raised by the abundance of examples of wrong English. Many teachers do not like to set these before their students except perhaps very briefly. Such examples make the book unsuitable both as a 'Teach Yourself English' manual and as a class-book for the uncertain non-English teacher. For native English, and exceptionally good foreign, teachers it could be most valuable, especially as a mine of modern and interesting examples and exercises.



Books Received

AFRICAN PASSAGES FOR PRÉCIS AND COMPREHENSION. C. E. Nuttall and J. D. Turner. *U.L.P.*, 1959. pp. 128. 5s. 9d.

BILINGUALISM AND INTELLIGENCE. W. R. Jones. Cardiff, *University of Wales Press*, 1959: pp. 67. 4s. 6d.

A BOOK OF ENGLISH PROVERBS. V. H. Collins. *Longmans*, 1959. pp. x+144. 12s. 6d.

BROADCASTING WITH CHILDREN: broadcasting techniques as an aid to teaching. Kenneth Methold. *U.L.P.*, 1959. pp. 128. 9s. 6d.

HEROES FROM PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA. Peter Livingston. *Macmillan*, 1959. pp. 47. (Pacific Heritage series.) 2s. 2d.

AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH PHONETICS for Arabic-speaking Students. W. F. Stirling. *O.U.P.*, 1960. pp. VI+50. 2s. 6d.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECTOGRAPHY OF SPEECH. E. Pulgram. 'S-Gravenhage, *Mouton & Co.*

JULIUS CAESAR. W. Shakespeare, ed. B. Lott. *Longmans*, 1959. pp. XVI+271. (New Swan Shakespeare.) 4s. 6d. (cased 6s. 9d.).

LIVING ENGLISH (edition C). F. L. Sack. Berne, *A. Francke*, 1959. pp. 238. Fr.8.60.

MACMILLAN'S STANDARD ENGLISH COURSE FOR MALAYA: Reader 2, Reader 3, Workbook 1B. P. M. Clements and L. I. Lewis. *Macmillan*, 1959. pp. 32, 32, 29.

THE MAN IN THE WEB, AND OTHER FOLK TALES. Philip Sherlock. *Longmans*, 1959. (New Method Supplementary Reader, Stage I.) pp. 76. 1s. 8d.

PLAYS FROM FAR AND NEAR, Bk. 1. Anne Chang Williams. *U.L.P.*, 1959. pp. 112. 4s.

THE STORY OF THEATRE. J. B. Priestley. *Rathbone Books*, 1959. pp. 70. 18s. 6d.

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. Mary Finocchiaro. New York, *Harper*, 1958. pp. XI+335. \$4.75. (London, 40s.)

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH, ed. Randolph Quirk and A. H. Smith. *Secker & Warburg*, 1959. pp. 192. (Studies in Communication, 3.) 12s. 6d.

TWELFTH NIGHT. W. Shakespeare, ed. H. M. Hulme. *Longmans*, 1959. pp. XXIV+264. (New Swan Shakespeare.) 4s. 6d. (cased 6s. 9d.).

THE WINCHESTER BOOK OF VERSE. H. D. P. Lee. *Harrap*, 1959. pp. 288. 8s. 6d.

THE YEAR'S WORK IN ENGLISH STUDIES, Vol. XXXVIII, 1957, ed. B. White and T. S. Dorsch. *O.U.P.* for *The English Association*. 1960. pp. 274. 30s.

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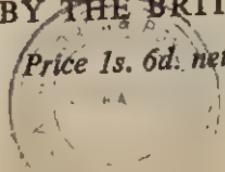
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English Language Testing: Problems of Validity and Administration

ROBERT LADO

*(Professor Lado, author of *Linguistics across Cultures* and other works on language-teaching, is now Academic Director of the Institute of Languages and Linguistics, Georgetown University, U.S.A.)*

I. INTRODUCTION

As one looks critically at language testing and discussions of testing he finds a great deal of confusion. He searches in vain for anything like a comprehensive rationale for the preparation of foreign language tests and examinations in line with modern views of language. I should like to discuss this situation and attempt to sketch such an overall view.

II. THE PRESENT SITUATION

Discussions of testing tend to deal with techniques as the chief consideration, without sufficient concern for the linguistic problems involved. The following questions are often debated: Should we use translation as a test? Should we use a composition as a test of language proficiency? Are objective tests easier than other types of tests? Are they valid? Can we give oral examinations effectively?

More meaningful questions would be, 'Do we want to measure auditory comprehension and do we know what it is? Do we wish to measure speaking ability and do we know what speaking ability is?' If we know what auditory comprehension is we will then be able to ask, 'Does translation measure auditory comprehension?' 'How well?' 'How economically?' 'Does grammatical analysis measure speaking ability?' 'How completely?' 'How generally?'

These are questions of validity and administration. With this type of question in mind let us look at some common testing practices.

Translation. As a test of ability to use a foreign language in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, we notice the following limitations in the use of translation:

(1) The most proficient students do not translate when they use the language.

(2) There are various ways to translate and to evaluate a translation. We can translate for artistic purposes, for accuracy of information, for grammatical parallelism, for vocabulary equivalence. We can evaluate a translation from these and other points of view. If we force a student to translate for vocabulary equivalence or grammatical parallelism, as is often the case in translation tests, we may tend to destroy his literary talent for artistic translation.

(3) The grading of translation tends to be inaccurate because of these possible ways to translate and the resulting variations that may or may not be allowed by the scorer.

(4) Translation represents a special skill different from speaking, listening, reading or writing.

(5) Translation is comparatively slow as a test. Unless he has had special training, it takes a good student longer to translate a letter than to write it in the foreign language. In the time that it takes him to translate a passage he can cover more material using other techniques.

(6) Translation is slow to grade, since the examiner has to weigh each response to see if it is allowable.

(7) The use of translation in the examination tends to encourage the abuse of translation in the classroom.

Perhaps the only favourable things to be said for translation as a test of proficiency seem to be that translation questions are easy to set and they are compact. The price paid for these advantages, however, is rather high.

Grammatical analysis. Tests that ask for grammatical analysis of sentences were at one time widely used in foreign language instruction. Labelling the parts of speech, defining grammatical terms, supplying examples under grammatical terms, were used as tests, probably because these were tasks regularly performed in class. These techniques are of questionable validity as a measure of proficiency in a foreign language because of the following:

(1) Ability to analyse a language and to use it are very different things.

(2) As a result, most of those who use the language effectively are unable to analyse it with any degree of accuracy or completeness, and those who can analyse it often cannot use it.

(3) In addition, differences in the terminology of various grammarians and linguists are a major complication in providing instructions to students and in scoring their answers.

Partly because of these considerations and partly because of the general evolution of education toward more immediately practical ends, grammatical analysis in language tests is no longer widely used or defended.

Dictation. Favoured by many because it is an auditory technique and involves some writing, dictation is so well established that one hesitates to question its effectiveness. Yet when we look at dictation critically we are surprised to discover the following limitations:

- (1) It does not test word order because the examiner reads the words in their proper order.
- (2) It does not test vocabulary recall because the examiner gives the words.
- (3) It does not test sound perception well because (a) the context often gives away the difficult sounds and (b) the examiner reads slowly and frequently repeats the reading.
- (4) Dictation does test spelling, some matters of inflection, and recognition of the forms of words, but the slow machinery of dictation seems uneconomical for these purposes.

Objective tests. Objective and short answer tests are being used increasingly in language testing. They are often defended or attacked as a technique without reference to linguistic content. On the negative side is the fact that objective items having the appearance of testing language proficiency may be quite irrelevant in content. An example will serve to illustrate this point in auditory comprehension.

In our example the examiner reads aloud the lead sentence, 'The man is watching a new car.' The student must choose between two pictures in one of which a man is watching a car and in the other the man is watching a ship. A third and fourth picture could be used showing the man watching a house and watching a train. On the surface this is a good item to test auditory comprehension, i.e. the student listens to an utterance and shows by the picture he chooses that he does or does not understand it. But on critical inspection we notice that to choose the car picture over the others the student need only identify the word *car*, which is so different phonologically from *house*, *ship*, and *train*, that he could do it even if his contact with English had been only through reading and he had never heard English spoken.

In contrast, the same item could be made to test an important phonological problem by changing the pictures of the choices so that one represents a man washing a car and another shows him watching it. The student would then have to hear the difference

between the /č/ of *watching* and the /š/ of *washing*, which represents an important problem in auditory comprehension if his native language does not make such a phonological distinction.

Another example will illustrate how an objective technique to test reading comprehension can be irrelevant as a result of inadequate linguistic content. This example begins with a longish reading passage on Greek mythology and the story of fire. The student reads this and then decides in each of a series of items which of three statements best agrees with what he has read. Here is one of the items: '(1) A man can lift a mountain. (2) A bird can lift a mountain. (3) A bird can lift itself into the air.' It will be noticed that this item can be answered without reading the passage. The right answer is so obvious that one wonders if this is a trick to trap the careless student, but this is not the case: the obvious answer (3) is the right answer.

In general we may say that the validity of objective tests cannot be judged on the superficial appearance of the items but must be determined on the basis of linguistic content or empirically.

Speaking. In oral production tests, where the present situation is generally assessed as one of failure, the attempts move blindly in the direction of having the student speak by one device or another. This direct attack on the problem reflects again the tendency to think in terms of the technique itself and its appearance of validity rather than of the linguistic problems to be tested. Tests that depend on general impressions of a student's speech are restricted in many ways.

(1) The personality of the student colours significantly the impression of his ability to speak.

(2) The tense situation under which the student must be tested results in non-typical performances that affect overall impression much more than specific linguistic problems.

(3) Scoring oral responses is a highly subjective affair even under well controlled situations. The differences are great not only among different examiners but for the same examiner at different times.

(4) Individually administered oral tests are time-consuming for the examiner and as a result tend to be made so short that they are all but useless.

Written composition. The writing of an essay on an assigned topic enjoys great prestige not only as a test of the ability to write but as a sign of intelligence, education, and academic achievement as well. Historically the ability to write has been the chief sign of learning. In defending the use of compositions as tests it is usually adduced that they force the student to think, to organize what he knows, and to deal with mature topics rather than trivial detail.

Under more critical scrutiny that considers linguistic problems we notice some unexpected limitations. (1) A single composition is usually a poor sample of the sentence patterns of the language, of its vocabulary, and of the problems of spelling and punctuation. The usual composition test may not elicit a single question or request pattern from the student. The particular vocabulary needed for one essay may be reduced and specialized. The spelling and punctuation problems are similarly restricted, and the student is able to avoid those that trouble him, which would be the ones we would like to have him attempt. (2) A single composition is a poor sample of the student's ability to organize his thoughts or to deal with mature topics. It so happens that the topics set for composition tests have to deal with matters that are familiar to the student, and differences in the amount of information the student may have on the topic will be reflected in his organization and treatment of it in his essay. (3) From a practical point of view, the scoring of compositions is a very complex problem, and as a result scoring is slow and inaccurate. H. Chauncey puts the problem of accuracy decisively in a recent article:

... if the essay examinations are somewhat unreliably written, they are even less reliably read. The basic problem is that teachers do not agree with themselves when they read papers, much less with other readers. In one study, for example, an eighth-grade composition was graded twice by 28 teachers. Fifteen who gave it passing marks the first time failed it on the second round, while 11 who failed it the first time passed it the second. As for different readers' opinions of the same paper, they have on occasion provided grades ranging from 50 to 98 on the same paper, as read by 142 teachers.

And in the same article,

To keep 150 readers grading according to a common standard is essential but well-nigh impossible. In spite of the fact that they are a highly selected group of teachers—expert readers brought together under one roof and given a day's training and practice in grading sample papers before they start on the examinations, and then supervised closely by veteran 'table leaders' whose sole function is to iron out problems of consistency in grading—they still do not agree enough to permit one to view the resulting grades with confidence.¹

This brief analysis of the present situation shows the need for a more accurate understanding of the problems of language testing. This will be sketched in the next section.

¹ Henry Chauncey, 'The Plight of the English Teacher', in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Nov. 1959), vol. 204, No. 5: 123.

III. THE NEW VIEW

The new view in English language testing differs from present general practice in the more specific description of what is to be tested. This description is made possible through a more powerful understanding of language through linguistics. This view permits more complete validation of tests on the basis of linguistic problems tested rather than on appearance alone. Through a better understanding of what we are testing the discussion is freed from its dependence on techniques alone.

To the question, 'What are we testing?' we can answer, 'Language in use.' And both 'language' and 'in use' have a more specific meaning than before. Since language is viewed as having meaning (content) and form (expression) we can further specify what is meant by speaking, auditory comprehension, reading, writing, and even translating.

What is meant by speaking ability? The ability to go from meanings to the forms of the foreign language in essentially communicative situations at normal speed. The forms in speaking would be the phonemes, sequences of phonemes, the intonation, stress, and juncture elements and patterns, the sentence patterns, parts of sentences, major parts of speech and structural words, expansions through modification structures and sequences, and the lexical stock within a given range. Notice that we say *in use* and not *by analysis or definition*.

What is auditory comprehension? The ability to use the same language elements as in speaking but in reverse order, that is, going from the forms to meaning. In auditory comprehension the range of vocabulary will normally be greater than for speaking, and the varieties of usage and dialect differences in pronunciation should also be greater.

What is reading comprehension? This ability parallels auditory comprehension in so far as it goes from form to meaning. It differs from it in the representation of the form by means of letters, spaces, and punctuation. And it differs also in the range of vocabulary, and the style of the sentence patterns that are typical of written English.

What is the ability to write a foreign language? It is of course the ability to put into the written forms that represent the language those meanings that are relevant to the speaker in normal situations.

What is translation? Essentially translation is the ability to render in one language what is already expressed in another. Translation can be done in many ways and under a variety of conditions, e.g. simultaneous translation, translation of written material, translation into

a foreign language or into the native language, etc. In every case, however, it involves the use of two languages, one receptively, the other productively.

Whatever the skill being tested it includes the elements and patterns of the foreign language and the ability to use them in communication. Hence the fact that the new view stresses the importance of testing mastery of these elements and patterns specifically.

Facilitation and interference from the native language. We know from experience and from research that the patterns and elements of the native language weigh heavily in learning a foreign language. We know that some of the elements and patterns are learned easily because of facilitation from similar patterns in the native language, while others are difficult because of interference from conflicting patterns in the native language also.

From this we simplify our view of what it is to learn a foreign language by seeing that it is mastery of the difficult elements and patterns. From this we proceed to define what it is to test a foreign language, namely to test the problems in actual use.

How to prepare a test. Once we have decided what skill or what combination of skills we wish to test we (1) begin by making a list of the pertinent problems we must test. This list will vary according to the skill we wish to test, and the native language or languages of the students. For example, the third person singular inflection of verbs is a problem for production for some students but not a recognition problem since the inflection is provided for them and the meaning will normally be clear by the expressed subject of the sentence.

On the matter of different language backgrounds the pattern illustrated by the sentence, 'He is a student', will constitute a different problem for speakers of Spanish and of Pampango, a language of the Philippines. Spanish speakers will tend to omit the pronoun subject but will have no difficulty expressing the verb *be*. Speakers of Pampango, on the other hand, will have no difficulty expressing a pronoun subject but will tend to omit the verb. The source of this difference is the pattern of the language of the students.

(2) We select or invent the types of items the test will have. Performance items, that is, items that require the student to speak, understand, read, or write, if these are the skills we wish to test, have the added validity of their directness.

If, however, it is not possible to devise a technique that is direct and tests the problems of our list, we are free under the new view to explore other techniques which, though different from the skill we are testing, will contain the problems we wish to test in essentially

valid linguistic situations. We are thus able to break away from having to ask the student to speak when we test his ability to speak, since this process is inaccurate and uneconomical, and we may use instead techniques that test his ability to operate the elements of speaking in indirect but accurate and economical techniques. The new view, by depending much more heavily on the linguistic problems tested than on the appearance of the technique used, gives us freedom to explore a much wider range of techniques in search for those that will be the most valid and economical of administrative and scoring time and machinery.

In choosing or developing techniques we must consider the effect they may have on teaching, since it can be expected that techniques used in the tests will be imitated or otherwise influence classroom teaching.

(3) Writing the items is the next step. Then, editing them by critical reading before they are tried will eliminate many imperfections that would otherwise weaken the test.

(4) We are now ready to put the test through experimental runs and continue its refinement on the basis of the performance of the individual items as well as the whole test.

(5) Final validation by correlating the scores obtained with the test with a criterion whose validity is well established would be a necessary step in almost every case. The validity of a criterion may normally have to be established by some slow and elaborate verification or composite judgment over a large sample of the student's work. Such an elaborate machinery for determining a student's ability would be impractical for ordinary purposes but may be justified in establishing the validity of a more practical test which can then be used alone as the measure of students' ability.

Evaluating a test. In looking at a test to determine its validity and overall effectiveness we ask what problems it tests and whether these represent adequately the skill we wish to test. We then ask whether the tasks performed by the student in answering it are essentially valid linguistic tasks. If not, we would expect to have some empirical measure of the validity of the test against a valid criterion. Questions of economy and practicality can then be explored. And we will want to ask what effect the test may have on teaching practices. Matters concerning norms, equivalent forms of tests, etc., have been left untouched in order to concentrate on the more basic problems of validity and administration which the new view helps to solve.

A paper of the length of this one can do little more than broach a subject as complex as English language testing. It would be a mistake

for the reader to reject the new view on the basis of this article alone, or, on the other hand, to accept everything blindly and assume that he is ready to produce effective new tests. The author has prepared a full-length book¹ on foreign language testing. The treatment of the subject there constitutes a more adequate basis for critical evaluation and for use as a guide in producing and using foreign language tests.

Models of Good English

A. J. WARNER

Where is good English to be found? This is a question frequently asked by students of English, both at home and abroad. Like many other questions it is simple to ask but complicated to answer. It is often easier to tell students what to avoid than what to imitate. This is borne out by the rather disappointing chapter on this subject written by Graves and Hodge, authors of that useful and provocative book, *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*.² They tell us more about where good English is absent than present.

Where is good English to be found? Not among those who might be expected to write well professionally. School-masters seldom write well: it is difficult for any teacher to avoid either pomposity or, in the effort not to be pompous, a jocular conversational looseness. The clergy suffer from much the same occupational disability: they can seldom decide whether to use 'the language of the market-place' or Biblical rhetoric. Men of letters usually feel impelled to cultivate an individual style—less because they feel sure of themselves as individuals than because they wish to carve a niche for themselves in literature; and nowadays an individual style usually means merely a peculiar range of inaccuracies, ambiguities, logical weaknesses and stylistic extravagancies. Trained journalists use a flat, over-simplified style, based on a study of what sells a paper and what does not, which is inadequate for most literary purposes.

¹R. Lado. *Language Testing, The Construction and Use of Foreign Language Tests: A Teacher's Book*. Longmans Green, London. (In process of publication.)

²Robert Graves and Alan Hodge: *The Reader Over Your Shoulder*. Jonathan Cape, 1943, abridged edn., 1948.

As a rule, the best English is written by people without literary pretensions, who have responsible executive jobs in which the use of official language is not compulsory. . . .

We are given a hint at the end of this passage where to find good English, but unfortunately it is not followed up by names or examples. Instead the authors content themselves with specifying the kind of prose that they would like to see develop after the Second World War.

There are other writers on good English, with minds much less acute and penetrating than Graves and Hodge, who are prepared to give their readers much more positive advice. Unfortunately it is not always good advice. Wide and vague reference to the English classics is made and the essay tradition is drawn upon heavily. The following advice comes from the opening chapter of *Teach Yourself Good English*.¹

Read as much and as carefully as you can, and your style will insensibly be influenced by what you read. For critical reading, essays are perhaps the best study, and a book of selected essays offers you great variety of style. The essays of Addison, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Macaulay, R. L. Stevenson, Richard Jefferies, and W. H. Hudson, are good models; so also are the essays of contemporary writers such as Robert Lynd, E. V. Lucas, H. M. Tomlinson, Aldous Huxley, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch.

To be fair to this writer he does advise his readers to avoid at first the highly mannered essayists, such as Lamb, de Quincey, Carlyle and others, though he adds: 'You cannot read too much of that fastidious stylist, Robert Louis Stevenson.'

The author of *How to Write Correctly*² is more catholic and sweeping in his taste and his recommendations.

The would-be author will find that good reading matter will help him, considerably, in acquiring a better style and a larger vocabulary. Here is a list of seventy-five books which can only be read with profit . . .

Shakespeare's Works (any).

Tennyson's Works (any).

Lamb's *Essays of Elia*.

¹ G. H. Thornton and K. Baron: *Teach Yourself Good English*. Revised edition 1945. English Universities Press, 1938.

² S. Duncan: *How to Write Correctly*. Foulsham's Pocket Library, 1958. Linguists may be interested to know that this book begins: 'You, of course, know that it is wrong to end a sentence with a preposition, to split an infinitive, and to use the present tense when the past is intended. But are you as sure of all the other little vexatious rules which govern the art of correct writing?'

Macaulay's Essays.
Leigh Hunt's *Essays and Sketches*.
Herrick's Poems.
Emerson's Essays.
Pope's *Homer's Iliad*.
Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.
Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

These are the first ten books on the list. It continues through a miscellaneous list of classics, including Scott, Lytton, and Kingsley, to Ruskin, Quiller-Couch and Barrie.

There are many good reasons why we should read Shakespeare, but the improvement of our English style is not one of them. The same is true of Lamb, Pope and Boswell, to mention three very different writers from this list. Lamb, whatever his merits, is the last author to be offered as a model to young writers. His fanciful circumlocutions and deliberate whimsy cannot be imitated without falling into artificiality, self-consciousness and a cultivation of the pseudo-literary. And yet Professor Duncan is not alone in putting Lamb high on his list of recommended reading. The author of *Improve Your English*¹ reproduces a complete essay, introduced by these words:

Perhaps you would like to read here an essay you have very likely read many times before, an essay you will certainly want to read many times again. It is here for your pleasure mostly, for your pattern a little. This is Charles Lamb's essay on *Old China*.

I have not made an exhaustive study of the manuals on good English. There are a great many of them, and some of them are sensible and useful. Even the three I have quoted contain some things that are useful and much that is harmless. But their approach to style is at the best unhelpful and at the worst misleading. How widely they circulate I do not know. At least two of those I have quoted are currently sold in the bookshops, and the fact that they present old material refurbished in new editions suggests that they find a ready sale. I suspect that they are sold most to those who will find them least helpful—foreign students of English and those wrestling alone to improve their style without any help from teachers or tutors.

But it is not fair to put all the blame on these manuals for current misconceptions about style and good English. The tradition of the classical English essay as a model still persists; although the reflective, humorous essay is really the last sort of writing that pupils should be asked to imitate or practise. I sometimes think it would be

¹W. J. Weston. *Improve Your English*. Pitman, 1935.

well if the word 'essay' were entirely abolished from schools and pupils were asked to write 'articles' instead.

I have accused Graves and Hodge of being negative, and some of the manuals of good English of being unhelpful and misleading. It is now up to me to suggest an answer to the question I began with: 'Where is good English to be found?' I do so with diffidence, remembering that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. But I hope that my suggestions will at least provoke further thought and discussion, and that we may get away from a narrow 'Eng. Lit.' approach to English style.

Good English, of course, is to be found in many places from the Bible to *Ulysses*. I am thinking now mainly of the kind of English that can be recommended as a model to young writers, particularly to writers who have learnt English as a foreign language and are a little diffident about their style. The kind of writer I have in mind has a good grasp of the language, with a reasonably wide vocabulary, but his writing is woolly and shapeless, sometimes rather incoherent, often clumsy and feeble. What he needs most of all is examples of clarity, speed, and vigour; good plain strong English, not the elegance of texture or perfection of melody that Stevenson sought.¹

Good plain English is to be found in the Bible, in Bunyan, Defoe, Swift, Cobbett and other writers of the past, but their idiom and tone are not contemporary. With the possible exception of *Gulliver's Travels*, I would recommend, at least to begin with, writings of the present age. For a start there is George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, admirably clear, strong, and swift-moving. Nowhere does his prose call attention to itself; it is neither colloquial nor stilted; it is plain glass through which we see clearly what he wants us to see. It aptly illustrates a recent definition of good prose suggested by Professor Sutherland.

Prose, it may be said, should be heard and not seen. . . . It is good prose when it allows the writer's meaning to come through with the least possible loss of significance and nuance, as a landscape is seen through a clear window.²

Animal Farm is perhaps the best example to offer as a model, but most of Orwell's writing is clear and vigorous. His essay on *Politics and the English Language* may be strongly recommended for its approach to language and advice on style.

An earlier writer, whose prose has admirable lucidity and vigour,

¹ See his essay on *Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature*.

² James Sutherland, *On English Prose*. 1957.

is Bernard Shaw. Although almost a Victorian in time, his idiom is sufficiently contemporary to make him a useful model. Many examples of good English could be drawn from the prefaces to his plays and from other writings. Here, for instance, is a passage from *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, where he is explaining a principle of economics without using the language of the specialist. His English is clear, simple and concrete.

A great deal of the world's work is neither producing material things nor altering the things that Nature produces, but doing services of one sort or another.

... Thoughtless people are apt to think a brickmaker more of a producer than a clergyman. When a village carpenter makes a gate to keep cattle out of a field of wheat, he has something solid in his hand which he can claim for his own until the farmer pays him for it. But when a village boy makes a noise to keep the birds off he has nothing to shew, though the noise is just as necessary as the gate. The postman does not make anything; he only delivers letters and parcels. The policeman does not make anything; and the soldier not only does not make things: he destroys them. The doctor makes pills sometimes; but that is not his real business, which is to tell you when you ought to take pills, and what pills to take, unless indeed he has the good sense to tell you not to take them at all, and you have the good sense to believe him when he is giving you good advice instead of bad. The lawyer does not make anything substantial, nor the clergyman, nor the member of Parliament, nor the domestic servant (though she sometimes breaks things), nor the Queen or King, nor an actor. When their work is done they have nothing in hand that can be weighed or measured: nothing that the maker can keep from others until she is paid for it. They are all in service: in domestic service like the housemaid, or in commercial service, like the shop assistant, or in Government service like the postman, or in State service like the King; and all of us who have full-size consciences consider ourselves in what some of us call the service of God.

Another very different writer who could usefully be drawn on as a model is D. H. Lawrence. But he needs to be treated selectively. Sometimes his prose becomes thick and lush, occasionally it grows hysterical. But many passages from his short stories and novels could be cited where the writing is easy, natural and vivid. Without self-consciousness, and without calling our attention to the way he is writing, Lawrence can focus our imagination sharply and clearly on a scene or a character. A good example may be found in the description of the young cock at the beginning of *The Man Who Died*.

So far I have mentioned well-known literary names, but a great

deal of clean and honest prose, worthy of emulation by students of English, is written by people who have no literary pretensions. A number of scientists, especially those concerned to convey their information to a wide public, have written beautifully lucid English. I would give as examples Sir William Bragg's *Concerning the Nature of Things* and Sir Charles Sherrington's *Man on His Nature*. Here is a passage from the latter, describing the life-cycle of the fluke-worm that causes disease in sheep.

There is a small worm in our ponds. It starts from the ripe egg as a little thing with two eye-spots and between them a tiny tongue-shaped bud. It travels about the meadow-pool as though looking for something. Living in the same pond-water is the pond-snail, with its delicate spiral shell. This it is which the tongue-headed worm is anxious to meet. It has only eight hours to do it in. Given success, with its tongue-head it bores into the lung of the water-snail. There it turns into a bag and grows at the expense of the snail's blood. Its cells which line the bag make individuals, each simplicity itself. A gullet, a stomach, some glands and a genital pore. This is the Redia, named after Francisco Redi, the accomplished Italian naturalist and antiquary. The cyst in the snail's lung is full of Redia. They bore their way out and wander about the body of the snail. They live on the body of the snail, on its less vital parts, for so it lasts the longer; to kill it would cut their sojourn short before they could breed. They breed and produce young. The young wander within the sick snail. After a time they bore their way out of the dying snail and make their way to the wet grass at the pond-edge. There amid the green leaves they encyst themselves and wait. A browsing sheep or ox comes cropping the moist grass. The cyst is eaten. The stomach of the sheep dissolves the cyst and sets free the fluke-worms within it. The worm is now within the body of its second prey. It swims from the stomach to the liver. There it sucks blood and grows, causing the disease called 'sheep-rot'. The farms infested with it are termed 'sheep-sick'. The worms inside the sheep's liver mature in three months and produce eggs. These travel down the sheep's liver-duct and escape to the wet pasture. Thence as free larvae they reach the meadow-pond to look for another water-snail. So the implacable cycle re-begins.

The sentences in this passage are very short and simple. Some teachers might say that it is not a good model to put before students for this reason. There is insufficient variety of sentence structure. It will encourage a style in which short, simple statements are added together. I do not think we need worry about this. In my experience, where there is one student who is too plain and too simple, there are fifty who are long-winded, clumsy, confused, blurring the sharp edges of meaning, floundering among words. It is less easy than it seems to make short simple statements. A style that errs in this direction can

be corrected without much difficulty. It is impossible to correct a style that is so cloudy and incoherent that one cannot see the landscape through the window of words.

It is sometimes loosely assumed today that all journalists write badly. This is very far from true. There are many journalists whose English is a good deal more lucid and shapely than that written by most literary critics. I think you are more likely to find good English in the *Guardian* than in *Essays in Criticism*. A student would do better to model his style on Alistair Cooke's *Letters from America* than on many more famous books. I sometimes think that a volume of the *Bedside Guardian* would be a more useful anthology to put in the hands of the young than *A Century of English Essays*.

For the encouragement of students overseas who are learning to express themselves in English there are a growing number of books written by authors outside England. Many of these writers command a simple and lucid English that could well be imitated by their countrymen. In India, for example, there is the novelist R. K. Narayan. His prose style presents us with an admirably clear window through which we may look at his Indian scenes and characters. Because it is heard and not seen, it is difficult to illustrate this prose in a short extract; but I think the following paragraph is a fair sample. It comes from his novel *Waiting for the Mahatma* (Methuen, 1955).

At the next evening's meeting Sriram secured a nearer seat. He now understood the technique of attending these gatherings. If he hesitated and looked timid, people pushed him back and down. But if he looked like someone who owned the place, everyone stood aside to let him pass. He wore a pair of large dark glasses which gave him, he felt, an authoritative look. He strode through the crowd. The place was cut up into sectors with stockades of bamboo, so that people were penned in groups. He assumed a tone of bluster which carried him through the various obstacles and brought him to the first row right below the dais. It took him farther away from the sellers of cucumber and aerated water who operated on the fringe of the vast crowd. But there was another advantage in this place: he found himself beside the enclosure where the women were assembled. Most of them were without ornaments, knowing Gandhiji's aversion to all show and luxury. Even then they were an attractive lot in their saris of varied colours, and Sriram sat unashamedly staring at the gathering, for his favourite hobby at the moment was to speculate on what type he would prefer for a wife.

I have recently read two books by African writers in which the English is equally direct and lucid, though perhaps without the humour and subtlety of Narayan. One is an autobiography, *Down*

Second Avenue by Ezekiel Mphahlele, and the other a novel, *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe.

I have given a number of actual examples above in order to substantiate my criticism of the 'good English' manuals and to indicate the kind of English that I would recommend to students. But I think the value of models is only a limited one. A student learns to write by writing. If his style is incoherent and clumsy, it will not change miraculously after he has read a model passage of clear and vigorous prose. Command of the language and the ability to express thoughts in plain and lucid English will only come to a student with time and patience and practice. At the same time it can be a help to him to see the kind of writing that he might aim at, and to see that it is simple, workmanlike prose, well within his grasp, without any literary mystique. It is certainly no help at all simply to refer him to the works of Shakespeare and the *Essays of Elia*.

Listen and Teach

R. J. QUINAULT

(*Mr Quinault is the BBC's 'English by Radio' Programme Organizer*)

The urgent need for more training of teachers of English in Asia and Africa has long been well known to all concerned. Conscious of this need the BBC's English by Radio Department decided in June 1958 to launch a series of broadcast programmes designed to help in the emergency. Under the chairmanship of S. F. Stevens, the then head of English by Radio,¹ a meeting of leading teachers and authorities was called to discuss the project. H. Harvey Wood and H. A. Cartledge attended on behalf of the British Council and promised its full support.

It was decided that the series should be aimed at the relatively untrained teacher and endeavour to provide for him a kind of

¹ Mr Stevens has since retired from the BBC and been succeeded by Mr C. W. Dilke.

'refresher course' over the air. Contributions would be invited on all aspects of the teaching of English as a foreign language, both general and particular. For reasons of broadcasting convenience the length of the individual programmes would have to be limited to 14 minutes but there could be a number of programmes on one topic. The programmes would be issued on 33½ r.p.m. long-playing records and offered free to any radio station wishing to broadcast them. They would also be sold at a low price for use in training colleges and schools. At the suggestion of A. S. Hornby, it was decided to give the series the general title 'Listen and Teach', and the present writer was made General Editor.

There was considerable discussion over the form of the programmes. We in the BBC wished as much as possible in this series to bring the experts themselves to the microphone, so the main forms envisaged were either talks or discussions. But it was felt that there would often be value in illustrating the talks by practical demonstrations with children, preferably a class of Asian or African children. There being no schools in this country able to provide such a class ready-formed, it was left to the BBC to bring together its own group of suitable children living in the London area. This was not a simple matter, but thanks to enquiries by an Indian member of staff, Mr K. Bose, a small nucleus of Indian children was soon formed, to which other nationalities were added later.

From the broadcasting point of view the talks and discussions presented no new problems; not so the demonstrations. Here two lines of approach were possible. Either the teacher could script the whole of his demonstration and he and the children read their lines or learn them by heart. Or the teacher could attempt a genuine passage of teaching in front of the microphone. The former method was easier to control—there was no risk of recording unwanted material—but it lacked reality and placed a premium on the acting ability of the children. The second bristled with technical difficulties, but it had the appeal of sincerity and has been preferred by all the teachers so far demonstrating in the series.

What were the problems involved? First there was that of time. With the length of a complete programme limited to 14 minutes the time for any demonstration within that programme was obviously much shorter: space had to be allowed for a commentary on its purpose—introduction, notes in passing perhaps, and concluding remarks. If there were two separate points to be demonstrated there might be no more than three or four minutes to spare for each. Now it is one thing to demonstrate a point in the classroom with a full

teaching-period at one's disposal. It is quite another thing to do so in just a few minutes, to distil the essence of a whole lesson into half a dozen exchanges, without a wasted word.

A second tricky problem was that of voice-level and balance. If the teacher was really to teach he would need to move about, now going to the blackboard and now to this or that pupil. Indeed the more genuinely he taught the more he and the children were likely to forget all about the presence of the microphones and either turn 'off-mike' or send the needle of the volume-meter crashing to the end of its scale. Modern microphones are sensitive and modern radio engineers resourceful but there are still limits to what the technicians can be asked to do.

Thirdly, besides the limitations of the teacher and of the equipment there were the limitations of the children. If we were to work the children too hard and go over a point too many times to get it right we should tire them and destroy that very spontaneity and sincerity we were trying to preserve. Moreover, in this country there are very strict regulations governing the use of school children in broadcasting. We could use them only outside school hours and never keep them for more than two hours at a time.

Fortunately the practice of continuous tape-recording provided us with a way out of these problems. The procedure we generally adopted was as follows. At the beginning of a recording we introduced the teacher to the children and left him alone with them in the studio. This enabled the teacher to get to know the pupils by name, explain his purpose to them, and also pick out those to be asked leading questions. The children were quick to see the purpose of the demonstrations and it was often possible to prearrange a 'mistake' while still keeping the demonstrations as a whole spontaneous.¹ Then came a first rehearsal or run-through with the microphones in position. Though putting it to the children only as a rehearsal, we always found it advisable to record this first attempt. Occasionally, it would succeed beyond our wildest dreams. Usually, however, the balance proved wrong, or a pupil got confused, or the teacher failed to make all the points he intended to. Sometimes he made too many!

Even if it was unsatisfactory, we generally played this first recording back to the teacher, to help him judge the effect and decide where improvement was needed. Then, with perhaps an alteration of

¹The mistakes were not always prearranged. Many occurred quite naturally and were dealt with by the teacher in his stride. But where a particular type of error was essential to the demonstration it was obviously best to ensure its occurrence.

microphone positions, we would record a second 'take' and perhaps a third or even a fourth. But there was always a point beyond which we could not go in our attempts to get a perfect recording. At some point the work became subject to a law of diminishing returns. Too great efforts to put one detail right only resulted in another, previously satisfactory, going wrong. The children's interest began to go and sometimes even the teacher would stumble and sound stale. There was nothing for it but to stop.

Thus, at the end of a demonstration, we would find ourselves with a tape of four or five takes of different length, most of them, curate's egg-fashion, 'good in parts'. The teacher's troubles had virtually ended, the producer's had only just begun. Our producer for this series was Thetis Tombs and it was now her task, in between recording dates, to play over the various takes, pick out the best passages from each and, with the help of the engineers, piece them together in such a way that clarity, spontaneity, good teaching and good recording quality were all preserved. A process requiring infinite care and patience, as anyone who has edited much tape, and had the ends round him like a tangled skein of wool, will know!

After a first rough-editing of the material, a play-back to the teacher to ensure his satisfaction. Some further editing perhaps, and then at last the demonstration piece is ready, shorn down to its irreducible minimum. There are still the teacher's explanatory comments to record, or if they have already been recorded, to adjust to the length of the demonstration. A new linking-line may be needed because the commentary has to cut in before or after the point expected, and care must be taken that such lines are recorded under the same acoustic conditions as their context. But these are minor difficulties compared with what has gone before.

The teachers who have so far demonstrated in 'Listen and Teach' include H. A. Cartledge, F. G. French, Professor P. Gurrey, Dr W. R. Lee and Dr Michael West. First to contribute was Dr West, a pioneer on this as on so many occasions. He set us an exceptional problem by choosing to talk on how to handle an over-crowded class. Our small studio class of Indian children would serve for some of his demonstrations but was hardly adequate for such themes as 'Keeping the Class Together', 'Mass Practice', or 'Mass Response'. Happily Dr West did not feel it was essential to have overseas children for these. The techniques he wanted to describe could be demonstrated just as well with a class of young English pupils, and he accordingly appealed to the headmaster of the local primary school in his own home village of Painswick. Permission to use the

school was readily given and arrangements made to send down a BBC recording car.

Recording a demonstration in an ordinary classroom presents even more snags than doing it in the studio. There is the acoustic quality of the room itself, which is likely to be hard and echoey, thus making a good balance all the more difficult to achieve. And there is the problem of keeping out extraneous noise, whether from the classroom next door or the street outside. (Up to a point we needed realism in these particular demonstrations, but not so much that it would prevent listeners hearing what was said.) Our recording engineers went down to Painswick the day before to survey the scene and got to know the conditions. The most suitable classroom was chosen and the recording equipment set up in an adjoining room so as not to distract the children. Meanwhile Dr West explained to his class what he wanted them to do and chose the children to play leading parts. The final result was surprisingly successful, though we had to repeat several takes because of the noise of an aeroplane flying overhead. The noise of the children's feet scraping on the hard floor was also a source of much trouble after the carpeted quiet of the studio.

F. G. French has now done two 'Listen and Teach' series of ten programmes each, in most of which he demonstrates before the microphone. In fact, the programmes in his second series ('Demonstrations in Intensive Reading') consist almost entirely of demonstrations. Working so often together teacher and class naturally came to know one another very well, losing all sense of strangeness in their studio surroundings. More than once Mr French became so absorbed in his teaching that he was carried into matters outside the immediate purpose of the demonstration. Indeed, it was not a demonstration any more but a lesson itself, and we in the recording channel, seeing the children equally absorbed, felt it would be wrong to interrupt and break the spell. We simply let the machines run and cut out the unwanted material afterwards. This combined with some fading in and out to show an interval of time in the middle enabled us to give a very fair impression of a lesson as a whole.

These 'Listen and Teach' programmes are being broadcast in the first instance by the BBC's Far Eastern Station in Singapore and also placed on offer to overseas broadcasting organizations. The first issues have been warmly received and are already being taken by stations in Ceylon, Fiji, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sarawak and Sierra Leone. A number of sets have been purchased by the British Council and made available

through the Council's representatives for loan to teacher-training centres. A list of the titles already out is given below. Other programmes are still in preparation. The BBC's English by Radio Department would welcome comments on the series to date, likewise suggestions for further contributions. The views and opinions expressed by the various speakers are of course their own and may not always coincide. We nevertheless hope that the series as a whole will provide a helpful symposium of all that is soundest in present-day teaching practice.

'Teaching English Under Difficulties'	(9 programmes)
by Dr Michael West	
'Learning, Practice, Exercise and Drill'	(10 programmes)
by F. G. French	
'What Kind of English Shall We Teach?'	(4 programmes)
by R. A. Close	
'The Writing of English'	(8 programmes)
by Professor P. Gurrey	
'Verse Speaking in the English Class'	(3 programmes)
by H. A. Cartledge	
'Aural Aids in Teaching English'	(3 programmes)
by P. Strevens	
'Demonstrations in Intensive Reading'	(10 programmes)
by F. G. French	
'Balance and Variety in Language Teaching'	(6 programmes)
by Dr W. R. Lee	
'How Can We Help Them to Learn?'	(3 programmes)
by R. Ridout	
'English for Scientific and Technical Purposes'	(3 programmes)
by D. Y. Morgan	

Editorial Note

Readers will be aware that British and American usage of English differ in a number of ways. From time to time articles by American contributors will appear in *English Language Teaching*; there is, for instance, that by Professor Lado in this number. The language of such articles will not be changed to conform with usage in Britain, except in so far as spelling is concerned.—W.R.L.

Correspondence

We are interested in our readers' ideas and views, and cordially invite correspondence, though we can give no guarantee of publication. When you write to us, please keep to the point and avoid long-windedness.

1. L. A. Hill writes from New Delhi: (a) Mr Bernard Lott says in his article 'Graded and Restricted Vocabularies' (*E.L.T.*, XIV, 2, p. 67) that 'it appears that no exact synonyms are available in English'.

I suspect that *almost* and *nearly* are exact synonyms, and would be interested to have proof to the contrary from any of your readers.

(b) Dr West's arguments in *E.L.T.*, XIV, 1, about the best age to begin language study have unfortunately not set my doubts at rest, because we do not seem to mean the same thing by language learning.

If a mathematician were to claim that arithmetic meant only differential calculus, and then prove by research that adults have a better aptitude for differential calculus than young children, this would not justify us in stopping teaching arithmetic to young children. If a group of young children and a group of adults or older children are both given *any* test to perform which is more suited to the abilities of the adults or older children, it is a foregone conclusion that the latter will come out on top. It does not need research to prove it. But this proves nothing except that the test was better suited to the abilities of the one group than to those of the other.

If by language learning we mean the sort of thing that used to pass for such when I was at my preparatory school many years ago—learning grammatical rules, paradigms and word-lists, doing translations and deciphering reading texts bristling with words and structures which had not yet been properly taught—then of course adults or older pupils will beat the younger ones at it. But can that really be considered language learning in this day and age?

Similarly, if we assume that language learning means learning words, we shall not expect the young child to do as well at it as his older brothers. But surely that myth was exploded when the Vocabulary Selection era came to an end.

Furthermore, if we equate language learning ability with ability to do intelligence tests, it is obvious that the former will increase with the latter. But what has real language learning got to do with intelligence in any case? Even quite unintelligent children learn their mother-tongue, provided they are not complete idiots.

I am much more impressed by a paper I was recently sent from America, in which it was stated that, at a conference on 'Childhood and Second Language Learning' held in May 1956 by the Modern Language Association of America, the consensus of opinion of leading educationists, language teachers and psychologists was:

'The optimum age for beginning the continuous learning of a second language seems to fall within the span of ages 4 through 8, with superior performance to be anticipated at ages 8, 9 and 10. In this early period the brain seems to have the greatest plasticity and specialized capacity needed for acquiring speech.'

'The specialized capacity includes the ability to mimic accurately the stream of speech (sounds, rhythm, intonation, stress, etc.) and to learn and manipulate language patterns easily. Support for the conviction that the brain has greater plasticity for speech learning during the first decade of life comes from the fact that, in cases of gross destruction of the cerebral speech areas, return of normal speech occurs much more rapidly and more completely than at a later age.'

2. J. G. Bruton writes from the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, India: I must join issue with Dr Wood over his reply to Mr Milman's letter (*E.L.T.*, XIV, 2). To my mind and ear all the sentences he quotes are perfectly permissible —in fact I would go further and say that these are the versions that I should prefer and use myself in normal speech; I am sure too that I should feel no compunction about writing them. I do not see what Dr Wood means when he says that it is a matter of subjective factors rather than of grammatical rule. Surely, when we speak, we speak as the people around us do and not in accord with rules, and if sentences of the type given occur normally then we feel no necessity to speak otherwise. I agree with Mr Milman that euphony enters into it, but it may be that euphony here means the form that we have become most familiar with in everyday use.

In Volume XIV, 2, p. 80, there is a statement that we never say 'these ones' and 'those ones'. While one may shudder at this use, I think there is no doubt at all that it is widespread.

[Dr Wood replies: There was, of course, no intention to suggest that people consciously think of grammatical rules before they speak or write, and frame their sentences accordingly. I agree entirely with Mr Bruton, that 'when we speak we speak as the people around us speak'; but this does not necessarily mean that our speech will be acceptable English (or whatever the language is that we are speaking). Many working-class people in Sheffield will say, 'As I *were* coming to work this morning I saw an accident', and, to use Mr Bruton's own words, 'they feel no necessity to speak otherwise', for they are speaking as the people around them do—their families, friends, neighbours and work-mates. But I am sure Mr Bruton would not accept this as 'correct' English, any more than I should, or any more than do the teachers in Sheffield schools, who, despite all their efforts, find it very difficult, and in some cases impossible, to eradicate it. As was pointed out in *E.L.T.*, XIV, 2, p. 81, 'What do you do *in* an evening?' and 'What time do you get up *in* a morning?' are almost universal in quite a large area of northern England, though the construction would sound strange to southern speakers, who would use *of*, and both for the same reason—that it is what they hear said by everybody around them, in this case irrespective of class, education or occupation. *These ones* and *those ones* sound to me quite un-English. Mr Bruton has no doubt at all that they are widespread, and he may be right and I wrong; but even so, his qualification 'though one may shudder at them' (if we may assume that he includes himself in the *one*) suggests that he is rather uneasy about them, and would advise his students not to use them. As soon as we start saying to students, 'The kind of native speaker of English whom you should seek to copy does not say that; he says this, and you therefore should say it, though you may hear the other from certain individuals, certain classes, or in certain localities', are we not beginning to lay down a rule?

Or again, if a foreign student of English writes *I have had my dinner two hours ago* his teacher will correct it to *I had* and will probably explain that the past, not the perfect tense must be used where there is a definite statement of past time.

All he means, of course, is that this is the practice of all educated and well-spoken English people, adopted unconsciously from those around them. But are we not justified in presenting it as a 'rule' to the foreign student, who has not the opportunity of picking it up unconsciously from those around him, as the native speaker has?

There are certain things in the grammar of a language which can be explained by, or expressed as, 'rules' in this sense of the word, but there are others which cannot. What sounds or 'feels' right to one person may not to another, though probably neither could explain why he feels it wrong or right. This is what I meant when I said that 'it is a matter of subjective factors' . . . You can give a student a 'rule', in the sense of the term explained above, which will help him to use *he* and *him* correctly, or to use the correct tenses with *since*, or to form his tag questions in the right way; you cannot give him such a rule for the use of *whose* in reference to inanimate things.]

3. Dr R. M. Regberg writes from Israel: While the reviewer of my book *English As a Second Language* (E.L.T., XIV, 2) stressed a number of minor points, the main purpose of the book was not brought out. The book is expressly a practical guide book for teachers and as such is not intended to give a complete course in grammar but rather, by giving examples, offers practical guidance in the creating of natural situations for the teaching of the various grammatical constructions functionally. The motion exercises are not intended to teach imperative forms, but to serve as a means of vocabulary building and general activation, so that even the slow learner may become an active participant in the class. The 'Do and Say' exercises are not restricted to the parts of the body only. Again, the object of the chapter on writing is not to teach writing, but to guide the teachers by suggesting a practical method for the teaching of writing to beginners.

I agree that the sentence 'The baby smells', may be objectionable. It will be omitted in the next edition.

When teaching the 'natural way', whereby the pupils are guided through the natural process of language acquisition, there is no language element that cannot be taught directly without translation, as happens in the mastering of a first language. A pencil drawing of a cow coloured purple will serve to help explain a humorous rhyme about a purple cow. It stands to reason that vocabulary and language structures, though taught by way of mimicry and practice, must be introduced systematically and progressively.

Question Box

We shall do our best to deal with the ever-increasing number of questions which our readers send in, but we cannot promise to answer them all.

QUESTION. What comment does an English teacher write on a pupil's homework when (a) it is badly written, (b) there are some blots on it, (c) he has been working too slowly?

ANSWER. There is no standard comment; each teacher has his own kind of remarks. On untidy or badly written work he might simply put 'Writing', or 'You must write your work more neatly'. Similarly, if there are blots on it he

might simply write 'Blots', to draw the pupil's attention to the fact that he had noticed them and disapproved. If the work is insufficient in length (which is presumably what is implied in Question (c)) the comment might be 'This is too short', or 'Too short for half an hour's homework'. The remark might be accompanied by a threat that the work will have to be repeated if it is not more satisfactory next time. [F. T. Wood]

QUESTION. When the headmaster comes into the classroom and the teacher wants the pupils to stand up, what short order can he give?

ANSWER. The simple command, 'Stand'. [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. In a training school a teacher gives demonstration lessons which the trainees observe. If the trainee gives the lesson and it is observed by the teacher, what is it called then? In French it is 'une leçon didactique'.

ANSWER. There is no accepted term. If it were called anything other than just a lesson, it would probably be 'a demonstration lesson', just as it would be if given by the teacher. The teacher is demonstrating how the lesson should be taken, the trainee is demonstrating his capabilities (or lack of them). [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. After I had given my pupils a set of rules related to the use of the article *the*, one of them asked me to explain its use (and non-use) in the phrase 'John is 23, stands five feet 10 inches, *likes sports and the girls*, is fond of . . .'. I should be grateful for your explanation.

ANSWER. This is one of the subtler uses of the definite article and one that is hardly likely to be covered by your rules! In general, the English definite article has the function of singling out something unique in a situation. We refer to *the door* in an ordinary room, or to *the book*, i.e. the one we have just been speaking about. In the example given, *the* singles out *girls*, not as unique in themselves, but from the point of view of a man who likes the company of the opposite sex. One could almost say that *the* here functions like inverted commas. There is no need of *the* before *sports* because the writer is speaking of sports in general and there is no commonly-accepted, special use of *sports* to be singled out in this way. Your enquiry illustrates the frustration likely to arise from attempting to teach a language through rules, which are often inaccurate and nearly always inadequate. A complex item like *the* is best taught in a series of situations and contexts which illustrate some of its uses. Two of these are mentioned above. You cannot teach all its uses at once—and certainly not by rules. [A. V. P. E.]

QUESTION. A friend of mine staying in London last summer overheard an English colleague say 'We arrived home in time'. Is it now considered correct to omit the preposition *at* in this case? Has this usage become current under the influence of the pattern, 'We'll be home in time'?

ANSWER. There is no question of its 'now' being considered correct; it has always been the only correct form, at least for as far back as need concern us. Nor is there any question of the influence of analogy. It would be quite wrong to say 'We arrived *at home* in time'. The idiom is *go home*, *come home*, *arrive home*, *get home*, *return home*. In all of these *home* is an adverb denoting destination—either a destination which we have reached or one towards which we are making. With *be* both *home* and *at home* are possible, according to the meaning one wishes to express. 'Is John *at home*?' merely means 'Is he in the house?' If we wish to

inquire whether he has returned from work, from a walk, from a holiday, etc., we must ask, 'Is John home yet?' [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. What is the meaning of the title of Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*? The concluding words of the novel are, 'On a field sable, the scarlet letter A gules'. What does A represent? My teacher once told me that the author used T for 'thieves', B for 'blasphemers' etc., but I cannot find any mention of T or B.

ANSWER. The heroine of the story is a young woman who is parted from her husband, and has an illegitimate child by an unknown man. The puritanical authorities of her town sentence her to wear a scarlet letter A on the bosom of her dress, as a public sign of her shame. She bears her humiliation bravely, lives for her child, and later devotes herself to good works, so that she comes to be respected. The A presumably stands for 'Adulteress', and the colour was probably suggested by the Scarlet Woman of the book of Revelation, who was often referred to by Puritan preachers and writers as 'the scarlet whore of Babylon'. The concluding words that you quote are descriptive of a design in imitation of a coat of arms on the heroine's tombstone. There seems to be no reference to the letters T or B in the book. Perhaps your teacher, in explaining the methods of punishment used, suggested that different letters denoted different offences, and that they *might* have used T for 'thief', B for 'blasphemer', and so on. [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. In a news summary I found the following sentence: 'A travel agency announced not to accept any more bookings for tourist travel to Ireland.' Is this correct?

ANSWER. No, it is incorrect. It should read 'announced that it would not accept'. It is so obviously wrong that one is inclined to conclude that the compositor (or the reader if it was in a broadcast) had inadvertently omitted the words 'its decision' before *not*. Or, if it was a radio news summary, is it possible that you caught only the last part of the sentence, and that the whole ran something like this: 'It had been decided, a travel agency announced, not to accept any more bookings for tourist travel to Ireland'? [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. I have wondered whether, in the sentence 'For more than fifteen years Dryden devoted himself almost entirely to the writing of plays', the idea of 'the writing of' would be as well conveyed by the word *writing* only. Would there be any difference of meaning? Is the difference only a stylistic one, 'the writing of' having perhaps a rather more formal ring?

ANSWER. Yes, it would be possible to say 'to writing plays' instead of 'to the writing of plays', and in this particular instance the two amount, for all practical purposes, to the same thing. To the extent that in spoken English we should probably say *writing* rather than *the writing of*, the difference is a stylistic one, but it is not merely stylistic; it involves two different ways of looking at the fact. In the case of transitive verbs the plain gerund (*writing*) represents an activity performed by the subject, whereas that preceded by the article and followed by *of* (*the writing of plays*) represents an activity as it affects, or is performed upon, the object: cf. *the opening of Parliament*, *the hunting of the Snark*. Hence which of the two we use in a particular context depends on our centre of interest. We should say *His life was spent in helping the poor* (not *in the helping of the poor*), because we are primarily interested in the person we are discussing, and the way he spent his life,

not in the fact that the poor were helped. On the other hand, we always speak of *the feeding of the five thousand* because the whole point of the story is in the large number of people that were fed. In the case of intransitive verbs, of course, the *of* construction is subjective; but it still differs from the plain gerund. The latter has the same subject as the finite verb (*I look forward to coming*) or one implied in a possessive word which precedes it (*I look forward to your coming*). With the *of* construction it is the noun that follows it that stands in the subjective relationship (*I look forward to the coming of spring*). [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. In the review of *English for the Certificate* in *E.L.T.*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, p. 96, I was rather surprised to find the expression *very many* ('very many of the exercises are of the type which asks the student to "correct the errors in the following sentences"'). I should have said 'a great many'. When is the former expression correct?

ANSWER. *Very many* is found chiefly in negative and interrogative sentences: *There were not very many people present. Did you have very many applications for the post? We had not gone very many miles when we were confronted with a difficulty.* When it is used in positive statements (which is not often) *very* is generally stressed in speech, and serves to emphasize *many* rather than to suggest a large number, as *a great many* would do: *If very many people took that attitude the scheme would become unworkable. Before very many days are up we shall be faced with a serious situation.* In such sentences as these the sense of *very many* is 'more than a few', or 'enough to be called many'. In the example you quote in your question *very* could really be omitted without any detriment to the sense.

It might perhaps be mentioned in passing that historically the *many* in the expression *a great many* is a different word from that in *very many*, though in modern English they are, of course, felt to be the same. [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. In a French textbook for the VIth form I read—in an extract from James Bridie's *Tedious and Brief*—this sentence: 'Even your masters can't tell you *very much that* will be useful to you in the adventure you must eventually undertake.' I find this *that* rather queer because I have always been told that in such a sentence one should write *what*. How can the use of *that* in this sentence be explained? As *what* stands for *that which*, are we allowed to understand *which* after *that*, which might explain *that* in Bridie's sentence?

ANSWER. No, the word *that* stands here in its own right. It is, in a sense, an alternative to *which*, but one would be unlikely to use *which* here, perhaps because of the preceding *much* and the (stylistically) ugly repetition of the —ch—ch sound. But it would be quite correct, grammatically, to say: *Here is a book which will help you*, or: *Here is a book that will help you. What* would only be used in a question or a reported question: *I asked him what would be useful. Which (but never that) might be used in a reported question, but only in the sense of—which of several things?* (A. V. P. E.)

QUESTION. In sentences such as: *He was like one possessed, He looked like one dead, what is the function of one?* Should we consider it as an antecedent (or determinative) pronoun in an elliptic clause (*one who is possessed*)?

ANSWER. The word *one* here is certainly a pronoun and it is used of persons—*He was like a possessed person.* It is also very close to *someone*—*He was like someone possessed.* A very similar use of *one* is to be found in the example: *One*

never knows what will happen next. A rather different use of *one* is to be found in: *I have two cars; one is here, the other one is at my office*. For this kind of use, readers are referred to *E.L.T.*, VI, 2, 1952, *Some observations on the use of the prop-word 'One'*, by F. T. Wood. The word-order of 'one dead', 'one possessed', may be compared with the example: *Here is the theatre rebuilt*. Compare also the title of a well-known play by Christopher Fry, *Venus Observed*. (A.V.P.E.)

QUESTION. I have often come across such sentences as the following. 'I shouldn't wonder if the whole thing didn't seem *rummy* to you' (P. G. Wodehouse), 'I wouldn't be surprised if some day you didn't inform the Gestapo about the mystery sniper for the reward' (*Deluxe Tour*), 'I became half frightened lest we might not have broken away from the earth clean and for ever' (*Erewhon*), 'It had never occurred to Mac even to doubt that the entire decision . . . would end in refusal by the patient himself' (B. Dryer).

None of these sentences seems logical. In the Wodehouse quotation the speaker thought the whole thing *would* seem *rummy*, and in the second sentence that the person he was addressing *would* inform the Gestapo, while in the quotation from *Erewhon* the traveller's fear is that they *might* have broken away from the earth. Why, then, is the negative used in all of these? In the fourth sentence Mac did *not* think the patient *would* refuse, yet the sentence suggests the opposite. Is there any logical explanation of these apparent contradictions, or are the sentences incorrect?

ANSWER. Strictly speaking all these sentences are incorrect, but all are not equally to be condemned. The first and second are examples of what Fowler (*Modern English Usage*) calls 'sturdy indefensibles', i.e. constructions which cannot be defended on either grammatical or logical grounds, but which are very frequently used and have therefore become virtually accepted, or at least tolerated. The key to them is to be found in the first one. The verb *to wonder* is used in English in two different senses. (a) It may mean *be curious about*, or *ask oneself*, in which case it is followed by an indirect question: e.g. *I wonder where that path leads to*, *I wonder how long they will be*. (b) It may mean *marvel*: e.g. *I wonder he wasn't killed*. With the former of these, in certain cases, a negative indirect question with a positive implication can be justified: e.g. 'I wonder whether it *wouldn't* be better to see him personally.' Here the indirect question corresponds to the direct form *Wouldn't it be better?*, implying or suggesting that the speaker thinks it would. Sometimes, as with other indirect questions, *if* is used instead of *whether* (*I wonder if it wouldn't be better etc.*), and to this, too, no objection can be raised. But then, by analogy, the negative construction is extended to *if* clauses following *wonder* used in the second sense (*marvel*), as in the sentence you quote from P. G. Wodehouse. This extension is actually illegitimate, since in such sentences *if* does not introduce an indirect question, but a conditional clause: but (despite Fowler's condemnation) it is often heard in speech and will probably have to be accepted as a colloquialism.

This brings us to your second example. *I shouldn't wonder* (in the sense of *marvel*) is felt to mean practically the same as *I shouldn't be surprised*, and so the negative *if* clause is extended to this construction also; and perhaps another thing that has helped to influence it is the fact that in exclamatory sentences a negative clause beginning with *if* is frequently used to express surprise at something that has happened: e.g. *If he didn't tell the secret to the very person from whom we most wanted it kept!*

In your first and second sentences, then, we have examples of constructions

which, though illogical, are often used; but since they could be ambiguous they are better avoided. For your third and fourth sentences the same excuse cannot be urged. These seem to be the result of a confusion in the mind of the writer. In the quotation from *Erewhon* perhaps the *not* has crept in through Butler's imagining himself asking 'Might we not have broken away?', and in the fourth sentence *It had never occurred to Mac to doubt that* has been confused with *The doubt never occurred to him that*, where the clause introduced by *that* would tell us, not what he doubted, but the substance of the doubt. The sentence would then be quite logical. The difference will be more apparent if we take a less involved sentence. *It never occurred to him to doubt that the story might be false*=he accepted without question the fact that the story might be false. *The doubt never occurred to him that the story might be false*=he accepted without question the fact that it was true. [F.T.W.]

QUESTION. In *E.L.T.*, XIV, 2, p. 81, there is an answer to a question regarding the use of *whole*. Does anybody know of a satisfactory treatment of *whole* which will account for such inconsistencies as 'my whole time'='the whole of my time' but 'the whole of my money'≠'my whole money'? The other uses are fairly clear but this one has so far stumped me.

ANSWER. A good deal of investigation would be needed before an answer that was worth very much could be given, and to set out the results would probably occupy more space than is available here. It may be noted, however, that though we should not say *my whole money*, we do say *my whole income*, *my whole salary*, *my whole health*, *my whole fortune*, and although we can say *His whole estate* (as well as *The whole of his estate*) was confiscated, we should not say *His whole land was confiscated* or *The whole land has now been sold*. We can, however, say *the whole land* if we use *land* in the sense of *country* (*The whole land was laid waste by the invaders*). This might suggest that we use *the whole*, *my whole*, etc., only with nouns that denote a 'complete' idea, that we can think of as a whole. *Land* in the sense of 'country' means 'the complete extent of the territory within certain national boundaries', and *estate* means 'the land, and all that is on it, enclosed within certain limits'. But when we speak of land being sold, ploughed or cultivated we are using the word in something of a generic sense (=soil, earth, ground). *Ground* and *earth* are themselves further illustrations. We can speak of *the whole ground* only if we are using *ground* in the restricted sense of an enclosure—a cricket ground, for instance—and we may speak of *the whole earth* if by *earth* we mean *world*, but not if the word stands for the substance which we call earth, i.e. soil. *Money*, again, is a general term, including coins and notes of various kinds and denominations, but one's *wealth*, *fortune*, *income*, *salary*, etc. all denote a complete amount of money, which can be thought of as a single sum. I do not suggest that this is a completely satisfactory answer, but it may provide a clue.

One other point should perhaps be added. If, it may be asked, we can say *the whole of the land* (in the sense of *country*), why cannot we say *the whole England*? (See *E.L.T.*, XIV, 2, p. 81.) Surely *England* denotes a definite and complete area that can be thought of in its entirety, just as much as *land* does? The answer is, I think, that in such constructions *whole* is an adjective, and the article therefore refers to the noun that follows; we can say *the land*, *the desert*, *the country*, but we cannot say *the England*, *the London* or *the Yorkshire*. In such cases therefore, we must either dispense with the article and say *all England*, *all London*, *all Yorkshire*, or enable the article to apply to the word *whole* itself by using it as a noun, and saying *the whole of England/London/Yorkshire*. [F.T.W.]

Reviews

A STUDY OF THE VOCABULARY OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

Ed. G. E. R. Burroughs. vii + 104 pp. *Oliver & Boyd*. 1957. 6s. (University of Birmingham Institute of Education: Educational Monographs: No. 1).

This is a study of the words used in conversation by 330 children (165 boys, 165 girls) aged 5 to 6½, each half year shown separately. The list shows the number of children by whom the word was used. The total number of words used in eleven ten-minute recordings for each child was 90,040; of these the number of different words was 3,504, average 273 per child (Range 56-578). The studies were made by student teachers, one interviewing, the other recording. The work was checked against similar studies in Weymouth and Scotland, and the results tally remarkably well allowing for local differences and a difference of date in Scotland.

This, in point of technique, is a model of vocabulary study and of presentation of the results. The list itself might be of value to teachers of English as a foreign language to young children in an approximately similar environment, e.g. in Europe. The technique might well be imitated elsewhere in other languages.

COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION. J. T. Pring.

xii + 83 pp. *Longmans*. 1959. 4s.

Mr Pring has long experience of teaching by phonetic methods and has produced an extremely well-devised and inexpensive book which fulfils its purpose admirably. The stated aim is 'to help foreign students of English pronunciation, fluency and method. It is addressed, not to beginners, but to those who have already some idea of the sounds of English. However, a previous knowledge of phonetics is unnecessary for the learner to profit from this work.

Gramophone records of the material are obtainable: it is all genuinely colloquial English.

The author has selected the common difficulties of foreign learners: he provides specific and comprehensive exercises for the differentiation of vowels and consonants acoustically related in some way, e.g. *week, wick; caught, coat; fin, thin, sin* (i:, i; ɔ:, ou; f, θ, s). In all exercises, the ordinary spelling is followed by a version in phonetic script. Avoidance of nasalization and the influence on vowel-sounds of a final or pre-consonantal l-sound (*dark l*) are duly stressed.

The author discusses the special difficulties arising from learners' languages, e.g. Swedish and Norwegian pronunciations of the r-sound before t, d, s, n and l. Aids to fluency with clarity, e.g. the writing together of rhythm-groups and sense-groups, vowel-length, weakening, elision and assimilation receive particular attention.

The appropriate analysis of a passage, sentence by sentence, for stresses, weak forms and stress-groups is very valuable assistance. A useful appendix lists categories of words for which ordinary orthography is misleading.

This book is indeed suitable for learners working alone but it will serve a teacher well too.

Mr Pring has obviously preferred not to mark intonation but to leave this matter to the example of the gramophone records.

There is an appreciative preface by Professor Daniel Jones, the script of whose *Pronouncing Dictionary* is used in the book.

ENGLISH THROUGH ACTIONS. Harold E. Palmer and Dorothée Palmer (ed. Ralph Cooke). x+287 pp. *Longmans Green*. 1959. 20s.

English Through Actions was originally published in Japan in 1925. The present edition has been changed in order to remove some of the references to the particular teaching situation for which it was designed, and, in the words of the editor, 'to bring some of the introductory matter and exercises into line with modern practice'. Palmer was, however, so much ahead of his time, that the changes have not had to be very considerable for the editor to achieve this.

The book was written for the teacher, and its object was to show him, in detail, how to lay a solid oral foundation in the early stages of teaching English as a foreign language. In his General Introduction Palmer recalls the movement towards the end of the nineteenth century which led to the introduction in a number of European countries of the Reform or Direct Method and explains, in a paragraph that is worth repeating, why the reformers failed to win universal approval:

'In their protests against the abuse of translation they tended to condemn as an evil translation in any shape or form. In their protests against the abuse of the use of the mother-tongue they tended to condemn as an evil the use of the mother-tongue in any shape or form. In their protests against the abuse of the use of disconnected sentences they tended to condemn in its entirety the use of disconnected sentences. In their protests against the abuse of "Rules of Grammar" they tended to discredit the discipline afforded by formal grammar. In their protests against the misuse of memorizing, they tended to discredit the process of memorizing.'

Palmer himself, profiting from these observations, elaborated a complete system for the teaching of languages which 'reconciled rules and procedures which at first sight seem irreconcilable' and which he called the Multiple Line of Approach. Whether such eclecticism is likely in the long run to be more successful in winning adherents to a method than the zealous enthusiasm of a reformer who will have nothing to do with established time-honoured procedures it is not easy to say.

This book represents Palmer's idea of the Oral Ostensive Line. In an earlier book, the *Oral Method of Teaching Languages*, he had split up the proposed material for such a course under the headings Ostensive (demonstrative teaching; object lessons) and Contextual (the context being in this case purely linguistic and not concerned with what linguists now think of as the Context of Situation). When he came to write *English Through Actions*, however, he found that the two types of material could not easily be worked into a single book. He therefore jettisoned the Contextual block and concentrated on Ostensive work exclusively.

Broadly speaking the book contains three types of material for the teacher, namely: a discussion of basic techniques for the teaching of oral English; detailed series of imperatives and questions and answers; and incidental advice on points which are likely to arise during the teaching of the material. Readers of this book who have not previously studied Palmer's ideas on language teaching, but who have already made some use of the by now well-known mimicry-memorization

techniques, may be surprised to find such a 'modern' attitude to language teaching as is implied in such precepts as: 'The teaching shall be inspired by the following formula: Progress in the study of living language is proportionate to the number of word-groups perfectly mechanized by the student' or 'In the classroom, "snap-work" shall be given a greater importance than work of the deliberate-reflective order'.

Every teacher of English to beginners should not only be acquainted with but proficient in the procedures described by Palmer whether for Imperative Drill, Conventional Conversation, Free Oral Assimilation or Action Chains of the Gouin type. But whether such a complete and detailed setting-out of each step is necessary even for the less confident teacher is doubtful. One would think that if a teacher was expected to grasp the general principles set forth in the earlier chapters, he would be capable of grasping the procedures themselves even more easily. It is not as though these procedures were very subtle or complicated. In the teaching of Conventional Conversation, for instance, the teacher has to bear in mind the four stages of Presentation, Recognition, Repetition and Reproduction and the eight types of procedures which can be used with them. This is all clearly explained in the introductory chapters, with examples, though only in such a way as to produce thirteen combinations (i.e. only a limited number of procedures can be used at each stage). One would therefore expect that it would have been sufficient for the author to give say three or four of the Series in full and thereafter indicate by means of the symbols (which are in any case used throughout) those procedures which are to be used for the teaching of any given pattern.

On the other hand, wherever the teaching of English to beginners is in the hands of teachers who are not only inexperienced in oral teaching techniques but whose own knowledge of English is so imperfect that they dare not embark on teaching of this kind without some authoritative guidance at every point, this book will be of the greatest help. This is almost certainly Palmer's main purpose in this book. The republication of *English Through Actions* at this time, when for one reason or another the teaching of English to beginners is in the hands of vast numbers of teachers of this kind, could be a major factor in improving standards of achievement in many parts of the world.

PRACTICE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH. Neville Haddock. 31 pp. C.U.P. 1959. 1s. 6d.

The author, in addressing this book to an extended range of foreign students of English 'from the newest secondary schoolboy to the experienced teacher back on a refresher course', seems to have cast his net rather wide.

The work contains useful reminders of the frequent occurrence of the neutral vowel and the weak forms of common words. However, only about a dozen lines are devoted in the text to indication of the vowels in phrases and sentences: they are shown by numbering, no use being made of phonetic script. In the case especially of the neutral vowel, this is regrettable.

The intonation, based on Armstrong and Ward's *Handbook of English Intonation*, is simple and clear. In dealing with learners speaking a tone language, the simplicity of tune and the marking of stress-intonation units (boxes) within the intonation groups is doubtless a constant reminder of the different use of melody in English but, at times, the 'boxes' cut across the natural sense divisions. Again, for the more advanced students, the simplicity of the tunes occasions some monotony and the boxes are no aid to fluency.

Rare words are frequent in the vowel exercises and most practice passages are taken from narrative rather than spoken texts.

There is useful material here, but those who propose to work with the book should make sure that it well suits their special aims and conditions of teaching and learning.

NEW DICTIONARY. Ed. Dr Arnold Leonhardi and others. 288 pp. *Verlag Lambert Lensing*, Dortmund. 1960.

This is a one-language English dictionary for use in German schools. The number of head-words is not stated, but seems to be about 6,000. Each head-word is followed by a phonetic transcription (Jones's notation), and by a symbol for part of speech. Then comes a definition or explanation of the meaning of the word, or brief sentences illustrating its use, or both. In a few cases (about 75), there is a small drawing to help out the definition, but these are poor. For many Romance words, the French or Latin original is also given. There are a few mistakes: for example, incorrect pronunciations are given for *altar*, *infectious* and *wool*; but on the whole the dictionary is competently done, and the examples are clear and idiomatic. There are, however, some unfortunate omissions: the omission of numerals and personal pronouns is understandable, but it is questionable policy to omit such words as *person*, *people*, *walk*, *sing*, *go*, *come* and *become*, even if some of them seem self-evident in meaning to the German learner. The dictionary is clearly set out, pleasant to the eye, and easy to hold.

LINGUISTICS ACROSS CULTURES. Robert Lado. ix + 141. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor. 1957. \$2.75.

Professor Lado is well known for his work (especially on testing) at the University of Michigan, where he succeeded Professor Fries as Director of the Institute of Language Teaching. He has written a straightforward book on applied linguistics for language-teachers. It can be read by teachers with little or no previous reading in linguistics and with only a rudimentary knowledge of phonetics.

The point of the book is that we can learn and teach a language better if we systematically compare the language to be learnt with the language of the learner. The learner tends to transfer the habits he has formed in speaking his mother tongue to the foreign language he is learning. He may do this by substituting the sounds of his own language for the sounds of the foreign one, because his ear is not trained to hear the difference in his teacher's utterance or in his own; or because, even if he hears the difference, he may not be able to reproduce it. He may transfer a construction in his own language into the foreign language. He may misuse a word from his own language in the foreign one, or not grasp a foreign word because it has no equivalent or no direct equivalent in his own language. He may misunderstand something that accompanies or underlies the spoken or written word: a gesture or a tacit assumption.

All this teachers of languages who share the native language of their pupils have always (not always knowingly) known. That is why a German teacher has better prospects of teaching English to a German pupil than a British teacher is likely to have; and so on. But language-teachers have traditionally picked up their knowledge of these things through years of teaching until they develop the cunning of the old sweat. Sometimes the knowledge has remained unconscious. Sometimes (usually) it has remained arbitrary and haphazard. When it has been

systematized, outmoded categories (whether rules of syntax or spelling) have been used that fit neither the language to be taught nor the language of the taught. Professor Lado's book shows the teacher how his knowledge can be made conscious, economically comprehensive, and functionally systematic. Some of the information he provides has lain around in monographs and articles, often swathed in difficult technical terms or jargon. Professor Lado brings it together into a whole, a readily comprehensible whole. Years of experience in training teachers have enabled him to select the right problems for discussion and the right degree of simplicity in explanation.

The first chapter is about fundamental assumptions and their significance for teaching, preparing or selecting materials, and testing. The second chapter compares sound systems (individual sounds, groups, stress, rhythm, intonation). The third chapter is on the comparison of grammatical structures, including discussion of the use of the points made on sounds in the previous chapter, especially stress and intonation. The fourth chapter deals with vocabulary systems, with the grammatical classification of words and parts of words, with words that have no equivalent in one of the two languages compared, with words that look the same but have different meanings, with limited vocabularies. The fifth chapter discusses writing systems, and includes problems of spelling and alphabets—a subject not usually dealt with in a systematic way. The last chapter, perhaps the most interesting and stimulating (because language-teachers have not hitherto given this subject due attention), is on comparing two cultures (usually dealt with in a haphazard or encyclopaedic way as *realia*).

It may be worth saying here that teachers should not be put off by the words 'system' and 'systematic'. Linguists sometimes make the mistake of saying that, since we know nowadays that we must compare *whole* cultures and *whole* languages in order properly to interpret the parts, we must therefore have a completely systematic account of two languages before comparing them. This would put off indefinitely the practical task of improving teaching, more particularly since there is not yet a complete systematic account of English. It is wrong to make the best the enemy of the better in this way. Each of us has embedded in him a systematic knowledge of his own language. Each of us can make some contribution to the total picture by collecting mistakes made in speaking or writing a foreign language, and classifying them. Professor Lado's book helps to show us how to become aware of our knowledge of our own language, and how to analyse the mistakes with which we are so generously presented by our pupils.

MODERN ENGLISH: A SELF-TUTOR OR CLASS TEXT FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS. Neile Osman. xvi+240 pp. Angus and Robertson, Sydney and London. 1959. 20s. (London).

This book is directed primarily at adult immigrants into Australia. It claims to be suitable for use either as a class text or as a self-tutor, but perhaps falls between the two. It contains many long explanations unnecessary in a class text, but has defects as a self-tutor: it claims to be usable by anybody who knows 'a little English', but its rules and explanations in fact require quite a fair initial knowledge of the language, and some knowledge of grammatical terminology; moreover, the majority of the words introduced have no indication of pronunciation, or even of stress, so that the learner is confronted with such words as *walk*, *work*, *watch*, *medicine*, *learn* and *accountancy* (all from Lesson 2), and left to make what he can of them.

The book consists of eighteen lessons. The typical lesson has seven or eight pages of grammar, one page of reading-matter, and two or three pages of exercises. A few of the early lessons also have sections on pronunciation and spelling. Most of the lessons are verb-centred: there is a lesson on the present continuous, one on the simple present, one on the forms used to indicate the future, one on the present perfect, and so on. There are a few lessons based on other criteria, e.g. one on the mid-position adverb, and one on prepositions after adjectives, but these are exceptional. One result of this scheme is that each lesson tends to deal with quite a number of different sentence-patterns, and each grammar-section covers too much ground for comfort.

The grammar-sections contain large numbers of examples, which provide useful frames for the learner, but the author puts too much faith in the formulation of rules and in the giving of lists (e.g. of irregular verbs). The same failing is seen in the sections on pronunciation and spelling: it is difficult to believe that anyone will really learn to spell the *-ing* forms by studying Mr Osman's four pages of rules. The reading-passages are concerned mainly with everyday situations in Australia, and illustrate the usages discussed in the preceding grammar-section; they do not confine themselves, however, to grammatical items that have already been formally introduced. The exercises are useful, but a little monotonous: too many of them comprise inserting a specified verb-form into a sentence. There are no comprehension exercises. Answers to the exercises are given at the end of the book.

Many of these characteristics are probably explicable from the learning-situation envisaged by the author: adult students in an English-speaking environment, obliged to use English in their everyday life and already engaged in learning everything at once (which presumably explains the author's relative neglect of grading and selection). They mean, however, that the book has a very limited value for learners in a different environment.

REGULARIZED ENGLISH. Axel Wijk. (*Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Studies in English VII.*) 361 pp. Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm. 1959. Kr. 24 (U.K.: £2. 8s.)

Regularized English is based, essentially, on the realization that while English spelling as a whole is unsystematic, it is made up of many sub-systems—some large and some small—within which there is a high degree of consistency and regularity. It is only when the spellings of separate phonemes are listed without reference to context that an impression of chaos is produced. Shaw's 'ghoti' for 'fish' is no more a possibility than were Ellis's fantastic concoctions of a hundred years or more ago.

Dr Wijk's object is to exploit the systemic features of English spelling in such a way as to establish maximum regularity with minimum disturbance of the existing spellings. He makes four claims for Regularized English. They are (1) that by the removal of most of the irregular spellings he has restored 'an intimate relationship between spelling and pronunciation', thus making it possible to produce a limited number of pronunciation rules which should make learning to read easier; (2) that excluding certain changes which involve the addition or omission of a final *e* and the reorganization of the spelling of the voiced *s*-sound in certain positions, the present spelling is retained in from 90 to 95 per cent of the words (compared with his estimate of less than 10 per cent in

the British Simplified Spelling Society's *New Spelling*); (3) that most of the existing distinctions in spelling between homonyms are retained; (4) that there is practically no loss of the etymological clues found in the present spelling.

The author is aware that theoretically the neatest solution to the problem of English spelling is the creation of a phonetic alphabet, and in Part I of his book he subjects the Reform Proposals of the Simplified Spelling Society and of Professor Zachrisson in his *Anglic* to a careful analysis. He points out how in both instances certain compromises prevent them from being consistently phonetic, though the changes required nevertheless 'entail far too great a transformation of the language to be at all acceptable'.

Dr Wijk's aims are more limited than those of the reformers who base their work on mainly phonetic considerations, and he readily admits the limitations of his system: 'When it comes to the other aspect of the study of the mother tongue, the writing of the language, or rather the correct spelling of it, it must of course be admitted at once that more completely phonetic systems of orthography . . . would make it considerably easier to learn to spell than such a system as Regularized Inglish, in which two or more symbols are often used to denote one and the same speech sound.' Underlying the whole scheme, therefore, is the assumption that the person learning to read can already speak the language. This is frequently stressed. Thus, in discussing the *-nger* group of words, in which there are contrasting pronunciations such as *hanger/manger*; *anger/danger*; *singer/ginger*, the author writes: 'Should one wish to indicate the pronunciation more clearly, it would be possible to do this by replacing *er* by *ar* or *re* in such words as 'anger, finger, linger, conger, monger, hunger' but such a change in spelling can hardly be considered essential.' The foreign learner will be disappointed to find that such inconsistencies remain, having read earlier that 'it goes without saying that a reform of English spelling which would eliminate the vast majority of irregular pronunciations and thus make it possible to infer the pronunciation from the spelling would enormously facilitate the learning of the language for all foreign students. It is such a reform of English spelling that we find in Regularized Inglish.'

It would be easy to find fault with many of the details of Dr Wijk's scheme, but it is more important to draw attention to its unusual merits. The recognition of many groups of words usually regarded as *irregular* as being in fact *regular* is well illustrated by the retention of *igh* for the sound [aɪ], and of *eigh* for [eɪ]. In the former group there are no exceptions to the spelling/pronunciation rule; in the latter *height* and *sleight* are exceptions. In R.E. *height* becomes *hight* and *sleight* becomes *slyght*. (This is one of the details that might be objected to, but the author justifies it on etymological grounds.) The careful weighing of the need for regularity on the one hand and the importance of retaining 'etymological' spelling on the other may be exemplified by the discussion on words with silent *t* in the sequence *-sten*. For these words ' . . . there are two theoretical possibilities open to us, either to replace *st* by *s* or *ss* according as it is preceded by a long or a short vowel or else to retain *t* and allow a special rule for the combinations *-sten*, . . . in Regularized Inglish. For the majority of the words in question I would suggest that the former method be adopted. For those words, however, for which there are closely related words in which *t* is pronounced, it would seem preferable to adopt the last-mentioned alternative in "chasten, hasten, fasten, christen, moisten" on account of "chaste, haste, fast, Christ, Christian, moist" . . . '

This book should be of immense value to the teacher of English. In it he will

find numerous lists of words based on the comparison of spelling and pronunciation that should enable him to realize more easily when he is dealing with words that are members of a sub-system and when he is not.

Dr Wijk is not a fanatic. He believes that his approach is the only practicable one, but realizes that many details may need to be changed before the plan can be generally accepted.

Books Received

ESSAYS AND STUDIES 1959. D. M. Stuart, ed. J. Murray. 1959. 132 pp. 13s. 6d.

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News

Centre for Applied Linguistics. A new organization concerned with English Language teaching has just completed its first year's work. It is the Centre for Applied Linguistics, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington 6, D.C. In association with the Modern Languages Association of America and financed by a grant from the Ford Foundation the Centre plans to be a clearing house for universities, government agencies and other institutions or individuals concerned

with the application of linguistics to practical language problems. The director of the Centre is Dr C. A. Ferguson, Lecturer in Linguistics at Harvard University.

One of the first functions of the Centre was to organize a conference in May 1959 on the teaching of English abroad, attended by representatives of United States Information Agency, the British Council, the International Co-operation Agency, the Institute of International Education and many other interested bodies, as well as linguistic experts from Britain and America. The conference marked a significant step forward in international co-operation on English Language teaching as foreshadowed by the U.S.I.A.-British Council conference at Oxford in 1955. A limited number of copies of the Proceedings of this Conference are available from the Centre. The Centre publishes every two months *The Linguistic Reporter*, copies of which are available free of charge on application to the Centre.

Language-Teaching Survey. Experience in underdeveloped countries has shown the importance of language in development schemes. Local languages are often unsuitable for international communication, and the implementation of plans (or even their formulation) is often delayed because those concerned do not possess an adequate command of any language of wider communicative power. The languages mainly needed are English and French, Spanish rarely being used for this purpose where it is not the main language of the country. The Centre for Applied Linguistics, to which reference is made in a previous note, called a conference in London in January 1960 of prominent persons in the field of Second Language Teaching, both English and French, and it was decided to conduct a survey of the present teaching of these two languages as second or foreign languages, of the needs of underdeveloped countries for language teaching, and of the world resources to meet these needs. The cost of the survey is being met by the Ford Foundation and the work on English is being done mainly by the Centre for Applied Linguistics in Washington and by a special office in London under the aegis of the British Council Linguistics Panel. The London office, at 25 Marylebone Road, London, N.W.1., where Mr J. M. Bannochie, formerly Chief Education Officer, Ghana, is in charge, will be responsible for surveying the needs of Commonwealth countries and some Middle East countries and the resources of Scandinavia and the Netherlands. The rest of the world will be dealt with by the Centre for Applied Linguistics and the Bureau d'Etude et de Liaison pour L'Enseignement du Français dans le Monde, in Paris. It is hoped that one result of the survey will be a co-ordination of the efforts at present being made in the teaching of English and French overseas.

A Commonwealth conference on the teaching of English as a second language is to be held at Makerere between 1 and 31 January 1961. The conference will discuss teaching problems at school, university, and adult levels, the use of English as a medium of teaching, types of examinations and tests, the training of teachers, text-books, research etc.

A course on a new method of teaching foreign languages was held in Paris under the auspices of the Council of Europe between 5 and 15 April. The method is an audio-visual one developed by the Centre Audio-Visuel de l'École Normale Supérieure de Saint Cloud, and is at present applied only to the teaching of French to adults. Material is to be prepared for the teaching of English by a similar method.

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